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THE ARETHUSA.



VOL. III.

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THE
ARETHUSA.

A NAVAL STORY.

BY CAPT. CHAMIER, R. N.

AUTHOR OF "BEN BRACE," "LIFE OF A SAILOR," &c.

"She is a vessel tight and brave,
As ever stemmed the dashing wave,
Her men are staunch to their fav'rite launch,—
Huzza! for the Arethusa."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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THE ARETHUSA.

CHAPTER I.

Slavery in Algiers.—Public auction.

It is not every man who has philosophy enough to lie down quietly in captivity and dream of happier hours in store for him ;—but the chances of eluding the vigilance of an Algierine were at all times slight, and the idea of gaining liberty by any but a desperate act never could come within the scope of any philosophy excepting that which occasionally falls to the lot of a midshipman. We hold the summit of philosophy to be, receiving a bastinado without a murmur, or to be confined, lashed down as a prisoner, without venturing a good substantial curse. Nothing eases the mind of a

rough sailor like a good round oath : it means nothing, and it can scarcely be marked down in the grand catalogue of his iniquities ; it is as often vented on a marlinspike as on a human creature, and is with honest Jack nothing more than lightening his heart of a load with which even conscience never interferes ; and as soon as uttered it is forgotten. Such was the loud, deep damnation which fell from the *ci-devant* captain of the packet, as he was bundled neck and crop into the hold, after having been the means of decoying Hammerton into captivity.

Hammerton had been well nurtured in adversity, for he was born rich and made poor : he had faced all dangers, and had outlived nearly all his companions ; he had returned to give his father the shock which ultimately killed him ; and had found himself robbed by the very lad whose life he had risked his own to save. His last adversity, his capture, as yet gave him no uneasiness except what he felt for the women,—even bondage was a luxury to his cruise in the Tribune's boat ; and as

he calculated all evils by comparison, he very quietly betook himself to sleep, not even once dreaming that he was a prisoner.

At daylight, however, the next morning, he was perfectly convinced that he was reserved for hardships which as yet he had evaded. The prisoners were brought on deck lashed together, they were examined, their pockets lightened of any superfluous load, and they were paired off; it being a principle with the Algerines to do just as some of our reputable class of horsedealers are apt to do,—put a quick nag with one rather slower: the power, capacity, and sprightliness of the one is pulled down by the slow, lagging pace of the other, and the owner soon finds it requisite to match the quick one; — the lazy animal is bought in at a very reduced price, and the quick one matched at an exorbitant sum. Now, slaves are often turned to the same account;—the lazy one would rather receive the stick than work, the active would rather work than be beaten: so that the pair thus matched do between them a fair proportion of labour; the one getting

stout upon his sluggishness, the other dwindling in flesh in an equal ratio.

Hammerton was paired off with the chief mate, who was an obstinate, stubborn, lazy fellow, and who hauled and yawed about like a pig in a high wind. He was, however, a little tamed by being an eye-witness to the punishment inflicted on the Algerines, who had forgotten their duty to Allah and the captain by getting drunk during the plunder of the packet.

Whilst the prisoners were undergoing inspection and assortment, the two Algerine culprits were receiving without a murmur a most satisfactory beating on the soles of their feet. No one paid the least attention to them, and the executioner continued to do his duty most ably, until one of the unfortunate wretches thought proper to ask if he was to receive any more. The captain, as if quite unconscious that such a punishment was going on, coolly took his pipe from his mouth as the stripes continued, and after leisurely puffing out a long column of smoke, answered "Yok" (no): where-

upon the poor devils, whose feet were beaten to jelly, crawled up to their chief, thanked him for the punishment, and expatiated upon his moderation. The executioner, however, seemed to know that a little more was yet to be administered, and coming before the chief with the culprits, made a kind of Oriental salaam. The captain's head nodded an assent, and in a moment both prisoners were released with the loss of the left ear. Not a groan escaped them—not a murmur of complaint was heard : it was fate which ordained that they should get drunk, and the punishment was *takdeer* (destiny). Happy people, who can thus meet all adversities, and find consolation in misfortune !

Hammerton, who saw this deed, said to his companion, the chief mate, “ I think, if we are prudent, we shall do as we are bid ; for if for getting drunk a Turk loses an ear, we shall in all probability, if we neglect our work, lose a head.”

“ I shan't work,” replied the sulky cur : “ I would rather they killed me outright.”

“ Have you no brother, no sister, no parent,”

asked Hammerton, "for whom you might wish to live? and cannot you muster up energy enough to let your heels save your back?"

"If you are so fond of work, my lad," replied the mate, "you can do a little for me."

Here, as a little bad feeling was already engendered, the blackguard hauled one way and the gentleman coaxed the other. This was soon put a stop to by an elderly Turk, who seemed to have much authority, thrashing both of them, and making them lie down and keep quiet. It, however, appeared that the mate was not quite so silent under his punishment as the Turks, for he bellowed lustily, upon which the Turk redoubled his blows, thrashing him until he was silent; much in the same manner as one often sees a brute of a coachman whipping his horses to make them stand still. During the shower of blows Hammerton never moved or said a word; and if by accident the old Algerine let the stick fall upon him, he stood as still and resolute as a donkey. The rest being paired, and the women duly kept apart, they were again placed

in the hold, and that evening the felucca cast anchor in the mole of Algiers.

The next day, preparations were made to get the prisoners in condition for sale. They were rubbed down like horses, fed better, and had some wine, kept for the purpose, given them : and although the head master of the prisoners called them giaours and infidels for drinking the wine, yet he took especial care, when left alone, to taste this fire-water of the Christians ; and not being able to make up his mind as to the taste, he tried it again and again.

“Now,” said the mate, “if that turban-headed vagabond would but get drunk, I would pardon him the thrashing he has given me, and now ’s my time to pay him off ;” here he edged towards the old man and gave him such a tremendous kick on the shins, that down fell Turk, bottle and all. The infuriated Mussulman, after rubbing his legs until the pain had partially subsided, coolly walked off for his stick ; but the mate, as he approached, made him understand that his ears were in danger, and nodded at the broken bottle.

The Turk understood the hint, and likewise the remedy. In order to prove he was not drunk, he administered such a drubbing on the legs of the mate, that he was obliged to lie down, and cried like a child. This only inflamed the Turk the more; and calling him a woman, a dog's son, and swearing he would defile the grave of the fathers of all the giaours, he thrashed him until his old arms were fatigued and he was obliged to sit down to take breath.

"I hope to God," said Hammerton, "I shall not be sold with you! for you have already broken my spirit; the sound of that stick is dreadful to my ears."

"It is devilish painful to my legs and arms," said the mate; "but I will kill that old fellow yet: if he does not lose his ears, I shall regret my thrashing the more."

"Take my advice—grow wiser by the experience you have gained. You see he can do as he likes with us: therefore smother your wrath, and strive to avoid the stick."

"I would not be such a cursed craven cur

as you are, to be beaten and not to dare to howl, for all the Turks in the world."

"And I," said Hammerton, "would not be such a fool as you are, not to bow to circumstances which you cannot control, for all the world put together!"

"See if you can bow to that!" replied the irascible mate as he trod with all his force upon Hammerton's feet.

"I forgive you, mate," was the meek reply; "for you have misery enough in store for you:—that old Turk will not forgive the insult, and you will have eight times the thrashing to bear; learn then to bear them, as I have borne your insult to me. Here we are tied together; let us work with as much cheerfulness as we can command, and use our utmost exertions to please our new masters."

It was in vain that Hammerton, who had been schooled in adversity, recommended patience and obedience; his companion was resolved rather to die than work.

Near the gate which leads from the mole to the interior of the town there is an open-

ing of some extent ; and here it was customary some years since to expose the slaves for sale, and to show off their several capacities. The human cargo thus to be disposed of was, previous to any bidding, shown in a state of nudity, and the buyers of these animals overhauled them with all the caution of men used to mark the maladies of our nature. On this spot by daybreak the following day some mats were spread, and many grave-looking personages assembled : the government had deputed men to purchase some of the stoutest in order to complete the fortifications round the mole-head, and likewise to carry the large stones which were destined to finish the mole itself ; it being beyond the wisdom of these barbarians to carry the stones on trucks, they preferred the method handed down to them with their turbans, which was to sling the stones between two poles, and make the slaves carry them by placing the poles on their shoulders.

The whole cargo was landed together ; and no sooner were the prisoners brought into the open space, than the wife and daughter before

mentioned rushed into the arms of the husband and father, and, hiding their heads, gave vent to a flood of tears. The unmannerly Turks instantly advanced to separate them, while Hammer-ton, forcing along with him the lazy hound to whom he had been tied, endeavoured to clear the Turks from their prey. With almost supernatural strength he succeeded, having his right arm free, in tearing the old man away; and giving the tottering Turk who had held him a sudden twirl, he dismissed him with such headway that he fell into the water. There was a laugh even amongst the Turks; but the rest, in spite of cries and entreaties, the stronghold of affection and love, succeeded in separating the parties. In vain the poor creatures knelt to their captors—in vain they implored Heaven for its interposition in their favour: the strained attitudes of the females only heightened the biddings for their charms; and as one was young and lovely, the other gradually waning into years, they fell to the lot of different bidders.

A veil was thrown over the faces of mother and daughter, and they were borne away

to different houses, — one to be sacrificed to the lust of the buyer, the other to be condemned to all the drudgery—the slavish drudgery—which religious rancour could inspire and brute beast could perform. The husband saw the money paid down for his wife and child; he saw the lewd jest which heralded his daughter's infamy; and although he again and again made an effort at a rescue, he was condemned to see the buyers of all he held dear in the world order them to different harems, themselves following their purchasers.

Now began the auction for the men. They had been inspected by the intending purchasers; many a hand had been passed down the back sinews of their legs, the muscles of the shoulders had been pinched, the size of the arm-bone had been measured, the head had been examined for grey hairs—in short, every part had been duly scrutinised, and the price to which each bidder would go was settled in his mind.

The first couple disposed of were the captain and one of his crew. In order to show the strength of the animals, they were placed under

the pole, to which was attached a stone of considerable weight, and they were told to lift it. The slings were of such a length as to require both the prisoners to bend down a little, before they could get the poles placed upon each shoulder, and this position showed the muscles of the legs and back to the greatest advantage. In vain they tried—evidently tried; the weight was more than their united power could apparently move. The price fell,—the enraged pirate asked what would be the highest bidding if they lifted the stone, and a considerable advance was immediately offered by the government if such should occur: whereas, in the event of a failure, the price was so much depreciated as to very materially discomfort the pirate.

He called four of his men, who were armed with long sticks about the circumference of a man's finger, and he placed them so as to command a good position for inflicting the blows which were to follow. Having again agreed with the bidder as to the price should the stone be weighed, he gave the order for the unfortunate men to try again.

With a fearful knowledge of the punishment which awaited them, they both tried. The muscles of the legs seemed bursting through the skin—the perspiration started like a fountain from their bodies—their backs groaned to achieve the task; when the pirate, fearful that they might not succeed, beckoned to his men, and they began to strike the prisoners with all their force over their legs, urging them as if they were horses, and goading them to the fearful trial. Escape was impossible, and to turn impracticable: they again tried, and succeeded in weighing the enormous weight, both falling down over the stone almost dead with exhaustion. The brutes now plied their sticks again until the poor fellows were sufficiently recovered to stand erect; when the marks of the blows, and the tender manner in which they walked, evidently showed how severe had been the punishment—how exhausted were the sufferers.

An objection was taken on the part of the purchasers as to the fair lifting of the stone, and the pirate offered to make them do it again; and when taunted with the impossibi-

lity of making such exhausted creatures raise so heavy a weight, he crossed his fingers, emblematic of the creed of his victims, and after spitting in their faces and kicking them for cowards who were afraid to work, he made a trifling reduction of the price, and the unfortunate captain and his man became government slaves to the Dey of Algiers.

They were kept on the spot, in order that if a larger purchase was made all the slaves might be driven away together, to carry sand like donkeys, to weigh stones for the fortifications, and to have black bread and bastinadoes for their pay.

It was now the turn of Hammerton and his sulky companion to be brought before these devils in Turkish garb; and no slight burst of pleasure was manifested as the two were brought forward. One was a miniature Hercules—short, compact, sturdy, and stubborn; the other slim, well-proportioned, handsome, and active. Such a contrast could never assimilate. The man who bade for the government fixed his eyes upon the mate, and made

a liberal offer for him without a trial. The pirate raised his price of course—(Turks are as subtle as Indians at a bargain)—a controversy arose, and the pirate, swearing a good Mahomedan oath, bet his value, as named by the government purchaser, that the slave should lift the stone by himself, which the two others, both stout men, had nearly failed to accomplish. It was a bargain, because it was safe betting on the one side; the Turk, of course, had he gained the bet, would have got his slave for nothing, and charged his master a wholesome price: on the other hand, it was one of those angry offers which losing gamesters are apt to make when they run a tilt against fortune and are sure of being worsted.

Two of the pirate crew now stepped forward and unbound the captives. One was sullen and reserved, as if winding himself up for an act of desperation; the other quietly and modestly succumbed to his fate, with a countenance truly resigned, yet resolved to do his utmost in any trial. They were now both unbound and standing beside each other: the

mate remarked with a sullen curse, that those turban-headed fellows should feel his wrath if they attempted to harness him as they had done his captain.

Hammerton sighed as he said, "We had better do our utmost at first ; and then we may avoid those cruel sticks."

"If I lift it, may I be —— !"

Hammerton merely replied, "Your determination will ruin us both."

Two of the pirates, who carried sticks, one the old Turk who had been insulted by the mate, now advanced, and giving the mate a sharp blow on the bare shoulders, pointed to the stone. The unexpected salute sent him into a boiling rage ; he turned round—grasped the offending pirate, shook him like a child—seized the fellow's stick, and with one blow broke it over his turban.

A furious row instantly ensued. The sturdy Englishman, seeing the coming storm, grasped hold of an idler, who had been attracted to the scene by the crowd, and seizing his scimitar, dismissed him to his companions, going at a

quicker rate than was customary, owing to an impetus behind which propelled the Turk beyond his usual grave and lazy pace. The lion was now fairly roused ; — he stood like Spartacus after he had broken his chains ; he merely made a few backward steps so as to get the water in his rear, and then offering himself as a fair mark, called out in English, “ Now come on, you ruffians, and see who will make me lift the stone ! ”

To kill such a valuable slave was no part of the pirate’s plan, and now was the time to strike a good bargain. His price rose ; but the wary old Turk said, “ If he does not lift the stone, he is mine.”

“ There was no *time* mentioned,” said the vender ; “ and we shall see if we cannot wear him out.”

He now directed his crew to get some long stout sticks, and make a regular advance to push the mate over the quay ; whilst others were sent in a boat to seize him in that helpless state and bind his arms. The Turks advanced in a semicircle, and making one de-

terminated rush, they succeeded in effecting the plan; the poor fellow, tottering back, fell overboard, the scimitar dropping from his hand as he attempted to recover himself. He was instantly seized by the hair of the head, and kept from entering the boat until his arms were secured; he was then landed, brought to the fatal stone, and harnessed.

And now the Turks found that it was impossible for the man to lift the stone, in consequence of its size hindering him from standing right over the weight. A platform was soon erected, through the centre of which the slings were led; they were then fastened over the mate's shoulders in such a manner that he could not extricate himself, at the same time bending him down; and the Turk whom he had so signally disgraced appeared by his side, with a brighter eye, a more resolute arm, a thicker stick, and a more willing heart.

The victim being secured, the pirate captain gave the nod to the administrators of his law, and heavy and thick fell the blows. The insulted Turk did not confine his

operations to the calves of the legs alone, but every part of the naked body was shortly in large weals. Still the mate would not make the slightest effort to lift the stone: sullenly, and without moving or flinching, he bore the repeated strokes until he sank down unable to move, even had his inclination been to have done so. The beating was continued, and fresh sticks supplied the place of those which were broken; but the insulted man,—he who had been beaten by an Isauri—a dog of a Christian, a cursed giaour!—although almost fainting with fatigue, continued to ply his strokes. Still more enraged than the rest, the pirate captain raised his sword to despatch him; but the government purchaser claimed him as his own—all further persecution ceased; the wretch was unbound, and the captain and the man already bought were ordered to carry their fainting shipmate to the prison destined for their reception.

The rest of the crew saw the mate carried on the shoulders of their purchased shipmates, another set of them freshening their way as they were hustled through the gate leading into the

town: a good lesson had been inculcated — never to strike a man in authority when there is no chance of reversing the tables. They were now all brought forward and disposed of but Hammerton: every one fell to the lot of the government but he — they would have nothing to do with such a slim, woman-looking youth; he was reserved for the captain, who, making an allowance to his crew, retained him as his own slave.

Hitherto the captain of the pirate ship had not shown himself a very bloodthirsty fellow; throwing the wounded part of the crew overboard was nothing more than a benevolent spirit to ease them of pain and broken limbs, of which they could not have been cured; but his wish to have killed the mate was the hasty ebullition of the moment, which prudence and the love of money would have stifled. Hammerton turned all this over in his mind, resolved to do his utmost in his new situation, inwardly hoping that he might be retained on board the felucca; for the hope always glimmered that she might be taken and he recaptured. He soon

found that he was reserved for another service, and that his master was a very knowing performer in the art of traffic.

Hammerton was removed in the first instance into a kind of coffee-house which stands down by the quay, and placed in a corner. Here he snuffed the savoury kabobs which were handed about to the different people; he saw the fragrant coffee and the still more aromatic pipe offered: and never did sweet odours come more inopportunately upon his nostrils; for the recovery from his fright, and his finding himself with a mantle to cover his nakedness, had brought back the common feelings of our nature, hunger uppermost.

His master was busily employed in playing a game of trictrac, (a species of draughts,) and was evidently much interested in the result. An old Turk who had been bargaining for some of the slaves was his opponent, and a large bag of sequins and dollars rattled upon the table. Although the room was filled, each Turk smoked his pipe in sullen silence, with the exception of those who had a little of the mania for gambling:

these fellows played either chess or trictrac, moved the men without breaking silence, and lost or won without excitement or despondency.

Hammerton watched them narrowly, and was thankful that he had before him these living specimens of predestination. He himself had imbibed his father's knowledge on this subject ; and it certainly was this which taught him to bear up manfully against the storm he could neither allay nor control.

As he had been placed in a corner there he remained. He saw some poor miserable beggars wander from table to table, picking up the crumbs in reality which fell from the board of the wealthy ; and once or twice he thought of following the example : but the sticks were ever before his eyes—the swollen bodies of his late shipmates checked even hunger when he thought of them, and once, when advanced about a foot from his corner, a kind-hearted waiter kicked him back again. Both mind and body grow callous by custom : Hammerton hardly felt the kick, and certainly evinced no inclination to return it.

Notwithstanding the general sullen indifference of the Turks, Hammerton thought he saw his master under rather unusual excitement, and he knew enough of life to be aware that his spite would be vented upon himself. He saw the pirate leap from the table, and, resuming as much gravity as possible, walk, without noticing his slave, out of the door.

The old Turk with whom he had been playing now pouched all the money—called for a dish of kabobs, another pipe, some coffee, and, folding his arms with most Oriental elegance, awaited the arrival of his food.

“Now,” thought Hammerton to himself, “if I were in any other place than this, I would most assuredly make an attempt for my liberty. But how can I manage it here? There is no friendly ship which could receive me; and if I merely put one foot before the other, I shall be kicked back into my corner. It will be better to wait until I am kicked out, and then it will be my fault if I don’t make the best use of my legs.”

The idea soon occurred to him that he had

been the object of the gambling, and that the bags of money which he had seen, about twice his esteemed value, had been staked. If the old Turk won, he was to have the slave without payment; if he lost, he was to lose double the value of the slave, but to retain him. He had now got him for nothing, and was in a very excellent humour. The old boy seemed right well to know that his new purchase could not escape; and in the plenitude of his joy in having overreached a pirate, he ordered a dish of kabobs to be given to Hammerton, who stood in the corner like Patience on the lee cathead grinning at wet swabs. When the man who enacted waiter gave him the food of which he stood so much in need, he gave him a long stick on which were stuck pieces of fried mutton about the size of a very small veal cutlet, which, being served quite hot, is one of the most esteemed dishes the culinary wisdom of Turkey has yet discovered. Hammerton's hunger would have made him believe that a piece of shoe-leather fried in train oil was delicious, but the kabobs (who has ever

eaten a kabob and not relished it !) were truly good.

A little refreshed with his dinner, and quietly chuckling over his having escaped the blows so plentifully showered upon his old shipmates, and which were likely to bring the mate to his senses, he turned his inquisitive mind to inspect the scene around him. Although the room was crowded, there was scarcely a word spoken. The slaves who attended on the company slipped silently along in their papooshes ; some were bare-footed ; and the only sounds audible were occasionally the chink of the money, or an Oriental sigh, which, after having puffed out a column of smoke as long as a frigate's pendant, seemed to lighten the lungs of the loungee. The coffee, in a small neat coffee-cup, placed in a gold filigree saucer, was almost the only beverage drunk, saving now and then some of that truly delightful liquid, sherbet. As each man finished his scanty repast, the money was placed upon the table, and the grave Mussulman retired.

Hammerton observed the company one after

the other, each with that never-failing attendant a pipe, retire. His master, or the man he believed to be his master, was seen busily employed in devouring a pillau. His greedy fingers were now dived into the dish, and now they threw up the rice, and as it oozed through his claws, he appeared more like a bear than a man.

“Egad!” thought Hammerton, “I must indeed be a fool to wait here whilst that old fellow is feasting! I will try if I cannot give my master the slip: perhaps there may be a Portuguese or a Spanish craft in the bay; and if a swim will accomplish it, I may yet have a chance.”

Watching, therefore, until the eyes of some casual spectator were withdrawn, he slipped out, and once more thought himself free. The sun was now near the horizon, and only a few Turks were lounging about the pier. The loose shawl which had been thrown over his shoulders concealed his otherwise naked limbs; and he found that few remarked or paid the least attention to the forlorn wanderer. To his

great joy, he saw a neat trim vessel in the bay, and from her peak floated a long Sardinian ensign : she seemed to have some pretensions to a man-of-war. “Now,” thought the poor fellow, “if I can but get to the point round the mole-head, I may make a start.” He looked round the little bay which formed the harbour in hopes of seeing a boat ; but although there were many large ones, there was not one of a size to allow of a pair of oars propelling it fast enough to effect an escape. He therefore walked boldly forward, and made up his mind to have a swim for it.

He had arrived at the extreme point without the least interruption, and was preparing to disrobe himself, when a very stately man, armed with a long silver-mounted pair of pistols in his girdle, stopped him, and asked him in good Turkish, what might be his pleasure in wandering so near the water ? To this question, Hammerton, who had made up his mind to have a fight for his liberty, answered in English that he did not understand a word he said, and pursued his walk ; upon which the Turk

immediately seized him. Off went the only covering, and the slave who had been sold in the morning stood before the very man who had attended in his official capacity at the mart of human flesh. A pistol was instantly drawn and cocked and pointed at him, with an intelligible hint that if he moved he was a dead man.

Hammerton's master had by this time finished his repast, paid for it, and walked to the corner. Finding his slave gone, he obtained the assistance of some ferashes, in order to pursue the runaway. On inquiries at the gate, it was evident he had not passed through it. They then ran to the mole-head, and there found him, facing the Turk, but quite unable either to attack or escape. They directly began with their long sticks to belabour him, and continued unmercifully to beat him until he arrived at his master's house, where, being kicked into a hole which would have been purgatory to a turnspit dog, he was left alone and in the dark, to ponder over his folly, and to make resolutions of greater caution for the future.

In the mean time, the sun had set. The last prayers of the devout had been offered up; and as the curtain of night began to descend over the landscape, the weary and the wretched lay down to sleep, and endeavoured to forget in deep slumber their toil and misery.

Hammerton now employed his leisure in rubbing his sadly swollen limbs, and in vain regrets that he had been guilty of such egregious folly as to risk the displeasure of a master who had ordered him some kabobs. We are told "Repentance ever comes too late," and our prisoner had full time to ponder on the truth of this wise saw. By degrees, he became more reconciled to his situation, since it seemed predestined he was not to escape; and believing that his repose would be most unceremoniously disturbed in the morning, he endeavoured to compose himself to sleep.

His rest, however, was soon interrupted by the loud piercing shriek of a female. The sound chilled him to the heart; for on listening to the words which followed—imploring God to protect her—he recognised the voice of the poor girl

who had been that day sold. He instantly arose, and tried every means to effect his escape in order to run to her rescue. Vain, however, were all his endeavours. He knocked his head against stone walls and wooden rafters, but he could not find any exit; and was at length obliged to desist, although he was not a person to be disheartened easily. At last the screams grew fainter and more faint, and at length entirely died away. Still he listened with painful anxiety; but not a footstep, not a sigh could be heard; there was a fearful silence all around. The victim had evidently been dragged to some remote corner, and he shuddered as he reflected on the melancholy fate of that poor and beautiful girl.

When morning dawned, which was at a very early hour, a man brought him a kind of Greek dress: it consisted of enough to cover him, with a red skull-cap, to ward off the rays of the sun. He was desired to follow his guide.

At the doorway he was pinioned; and as he had previously manifested some inclination to escape, a large piece of wood was fastened to his

right leg : and after a piece of black coarse bread and some water had been given him, he was marched off. By way of a gentle hint, he was in the first instance conducted to the mole, where he saw his shipmates at work. The captain and his companion had done their duty without the aid of the stick ; but the mate, who resolutely determined to refuse to labour, was tied to a stone, with two or three people employed in giving him a severe bastinado.

His guide, after pointing out the mate to Hammerton, shook a stick he carried in a very ominous manner, and leading him by the captain, who had a very heavy load of sand on his back, he was conducted through that wretched town, and passing out of a gate to the westward, was released from his log and commanded to quicken his pace into the interior.

Hammerton, finding all chance of escape now impossible, wisely made the best of his situation. His guide spoke a little of the *lingua Franca*, and the captive began to turn the moments to some account by learning the Arabic names of

different things as they proceeded. By his cheerful manner he soon gained upon the Turk ; and, in short, a doubtful friendship was soon established between them.

They had walked some miles into the interior, when they arrived at a large caravansary, into which they entered and reposed for some time. Loitering about the house, were some of those strolling story-tellers so often met with in the East ; but as Hammerton did not understand a word they said, and as his guide fell asleep, the wandering romancers soon gave up their vocation. Hammerton followed the example of his friend, and quickly sunk in a deep sleep. In this caravansary they remained during the heat of the day.

Towards evening they again set forth, steering a little to the southward, until they came to an old rambling kind of building. Here they were saluted by about fifty dogs, which came rushing forth, howling and barking at the intruders. The old guide called them by different names ; one wagged his tail, another growled into his corner, and the rest slunk off upon the

reception of a heavy and well-directed salute of the stick.

Hammerton was led into a miserable room, which had no furniture but one or two planks supported upon a rough unbarked stump of a tree, to which the Turk pointed, and closing his eyes and giving an imitative snore, plainly gave his companion to understand that that would be his bed. Hammerton was then left alone ; but shortly afterwards the savoury smell of kabobs met his nose. Some black bread was soon brought, with which, and a few pieces of mutton taken from the Turk's stick, both Christian and Mahomedan made a somewhat satisfactory meal.

Here the Turk gave him to understand that his comrades would have to drag on a life of eternal slavery and hard labour, unless they could purchase their freedom ; and that long before he returned to Algiers, the stubborn mate would have become a good servant, or be starved. He made Hammerton clearly understand, however, by means of his *lingua Franca*, that he was reserved for a life far more pleasur-

able, and that his old master was sorry when he found the evening before that he had attempted to escape. He told him that their present abode was only for the night, as his master's house was further in the interior, and that, at the expiration of a fortnight, the whole establishment would arrive.

A kind of friendship having sprung up between Mustapha and Hammerton, the latter became more cheerful, being only a little saddened whenever the former, with much gravity, endeavoured to persuade him to become a Turk; indicating that he himself could assist him in the first necessary operation, and that afterwards he would become much higher in the estimation of the inmates of the house.

The next day they again moved forward, and, after a tedious journey of fourteen days, during which they sometimes got a ride on a passing camel, they arrived and were fairly established in the country-house of Mohammed Benzali Berzroom.

CHAPTER II.

Corncob's notions of equality. — Captain Murray's discipline.

THE Arethusa having cleared the land, shaped her course down Channel, and ultimately arrived at the latitude of Cape St. Vincent, off which about a hundred miles Captain Murray was directed to open his secret orders. He then found that he was directed to cruise in the vicinity of Madeira for four months ; after which he was to proceed to the Coast of Africa, to visit Goree, Sierra Leone, and sweep that inhospitable shore down to the Bight of Benin. He was then to return to Gibraltar, where further orders would await his arrival ; if, however, these should not have arrived, he was to place his ship under the

directions of the commodore there. The accident which occurred to her in the Bay of Biscay, however, frustrated the completion of these orders.

The morning after her departure from Spithead, Captain Murray learned from his first lieutenant during breakfast the whole failure of the press-gang; at which he rejoiced, although he did not allow his pleasure to escape his lips.

“One, do you say,” he began, “rather than serve risked his life, perhaps lost it in attempting to desert?”

“That was the first impression, sir,” answered the lieutenant; “but I have been informed this morning that he is safe on board.”

“Poor fellow!” said Murray; “I cannot find it in my heart to censure that which I cannot but applaud. Was he stowed away below, or concealed in the mizen-chains?”

“No, sir; he was discovered fast asleep in Mr. Weazel’s hammock. The fact is, that the American, who is as extraordinary a piece of machinery as ever worked, came aft to know

why he had not the same advantages as the other pressed man? saying ‘he thought it was tarnation hard that he should be jammed up between two of the starboard watch, and have to wash out the mess-kids, whilst the man who was taken with him was amusing himself with his three fingers playing the flute, with a servant to wait upon him, and swinging-room for his hammock.’ This led to a little inquiry, and we found out that it was Mr. Weazel we had pressed, sorely against his will, and who, during the time he was lying in the stern-sheets of the cutter with Corncob, was amusing himself in rubbing the American’s face with some of the dirt into which he himself had been rolled; and as far as three fingers could do the deed, his did it effectually: for never was a dirtier American handed up the side of any of his Majesty’s ships of war.”

“ Pray, Mr. Jones, where did you find Mr. Weazel ?”

“ In rather a questionable place, sir,—where he left some of his clothes behind him. No sooner was he sent aft on the quarter-deck,

than he walked over the mizen-chains, got into the main-deck port, and turned quietly into his hammock."

"That fellow," remarked the captain, "is always in some mischief; but on this occasion I must say that I cannot help being pleased with the result. We must now, Mr. Jones, turn our whole attention to practising the guns: they are smart enough aloft in reefing and furling, and they certainly work the ship in good style; but I must also have them expert and active at their quarters. You must desire the gunner to look after the magazine; to-night we must fill the powder: and even if we fall in with two frigates, I shall, I trust, have confidence enough in my crew to face them without hesitation."

"I hope, sir," said Mr. Jones, "that such an opportunity may occur. I am perfectly satisfied that the *Arethusa* will always maintain the high opinion she has hitherto deserved. But I really think we shall have some trouble in making the gunner attend to the magazine to-night, for it is Saturday night."

“ I hope, Mr. Jones, he is not addicted to drunkenness ? If he is, as sure as he is now the gunner, he shall shortly be before the mast.”

“ On the contrary, sir,” replied the first lieutenant, “ he is the most sober, steady person in the world : but he is very religious, and directly Sunday morning comes he will walk off to his cabin, let the consequences be what they may.”

“ I respect him for his feeling, for it gives proof of his sincerity. Let the lights be put out at ten o’clock, and his duty will be done by midnight. This new man—this Corncob, what is he like ?”

“ Really, sir, he talks and acts like a true American : he declares that we shall have a war on account of impressing him, and speaks, I understand, largely of his vast possessions on the shores of the Chesapeake.”

“ Had he a protection when you pressed him ?”

“ None, sir, but a stick, which he called such, and used with a strong arm.”

“ We shall make a sailor of him, and go to war too if it is necessary.”

The first lieutenant now walked on deck ; and shortly afterwards Captain Murray made his appearance there also. His quick eye was aloft in a moment ; but every sail was properly set—not a yarn hung like an Irish pendant from any of the ropes—everything was neat aloft, whilst the quarter-deck was clean, the ropes nicely flemished down, and everything bore witness to the order of the frigate and the care of her first lieutenant. The frigate was then standing down the Channel with a favourable breeze, and Captain Murray was looking over the gangway in order to estimate the sailing of the ship, when he felt some one smack him on the back : he turned round, for he had his epaulet on his right shoulder, to punish such want of respect, amounting to a violation of discipline.

“ I just expect,” said Jonathan Corncob, “ that you call yourself the captain of this ship, and I’m pretty considerably mistaken if I don’t get satisfaction for my ill-treatment.

Here am I, Jonathan Corncob, citizen of the United States, lugged like a beaver out of a trap, jammed down into a swinging bed, crammed into a mess with very little to eat, my coat-tails cut off, my Havannah hat chucked overboard, my hair snipped by a rascally ruffian,—and all because I was walking home to go to bed at the inn at Gosport! This is pretty considerable tyranny, I calculate; and I'm not the man to put up with it for all the English frigates or brass-bottom serpents that ever crossed our seas. You speak American language, I expect: so now out with your answer, and no flustification."

If anything could have taken a young captain aback, it was such an attack as this when the eyes of half the ship's company were upon him, and where he knew every word was weighed—every action noticed.

"Mr. Jones," said Captain Murray with the greatest coolness, "is this the man who was pressed? or is he one of the ship's company gone mad? Take your hat off, sir, when you stand before your captain."

“Take my hat off!” replied Jonathan; “I expect I shall do no such thing, or I calculate I may get a breeze of wind in my hair; and I have not yet got over my giddiness when they put me to the bars and made me run round and round like a squirrel in a cage.

“Is he mad, Mr. Jones?”

“No, sir; I have not seen anything like it before now; but, on the contrary, I thought he went to his duty with cheerfulness.”

“Send the clerk here,” said Captain Murray.

The clerk came. “Get the articles of war and read them to this fellow; let him understand what is the penalty of insubordination, disrespect, disobedience of orders; and report to me when they have been read to him.”

“I tell you what it is, captain: you think you have brought me to a tarnation uncomfortable fix; but I calculate I shall get along yet.”

“Here, sir,” said Captain Murray; “listen to me. You seem to be what you say, an American, for no Englishman would be half so impertinent; but you have not any pro-

tection, which, as an American subject, you were bound to have produced. Failing that, I have a right to consider you an Englishman, who, not having any calling or trade, is liable to impressment. You are pressed into his Majesty's service: you have a duty to perform; it is mine to see that it is done: and be assured, do it you shall, whether you like it or not. Had it been light when you were taken, in all probability you would have been released on account of your age: but being here, we are obliged to keep you; and as this is the last time I shall speak to you on the subject, let me advise you to do your duty with alacrity, and spare me the trouble and the pain I shall experience in enforcing obedience to my orders."

"I'm no Englishman, and I'll not do anything. I am a man of land and dollars in the State: and I tell you, captain, that I have, in my house on the borders of James River, sheltered your countryman in distress; and (though to be sure I was repaid—ay, and by a man of your own name, only he

called himself Hector) I gave money to take the poor fellow back to his own country: and this is the return! But I expect I'm a free man, and no power on earth or on the sea shall make me do one moment's duty, or consent to have the yoke placed round my neck to be driven to work like an ox. You may flog me if you dare; but I calculate vengeance shall fall upon you, or else I have mistaken the courage of the man I assisted—and that man's name is Hammerton."

It immediately occurred to Murray that this was the American of whom he had heard his father speak. This became evident by the conversation which ensued; and as our hero was in all but in money more inclined to generosity than to its opposite extreme, he desired that Corncob might be released from the thralldom of the first lieutenant, be placed to mess with the gunner; and having been fitted out in a coat with long tails to it, he was invited to dine with the captain, instead of being seized up to the gratings.

Corncob was a man of highly independent

mind—one of your upright and downright liberty and equality men, who believed in anything rather than the divine right of kings, or the legal dominion of smaller sovereigns in command of ships; and to Corncob it was the same if he shook hands with the sweeper in the waist, or with the captain in all his glory. His messmate was, on the contrary, one who had all his life listened to nothing but martial law, and the law which he in his ignorance had construed from his religion; and thus with such an acid and alkali it was not likely that a very friendly effervescence would be produced.

Whilst the gallant frigate is shaping her course southward, we may as well record a conversation illustrative of the gunner and Corncob. It began at noon, on the day that the discovery was made relative to his being an American gentleman, as a piece of salt beef was placed on the gunner's table, which was not quite alone on the festive board, there being two potatoes and some biscuits, whilst a considerable fid of duff, as hard as a tennis-ball and as heavy as a shot, made

up the meal of the happy and contented gunner.

“I’m expecting, Mr. Gunner,” began Corn-cob, “that this cursed fix into which I am brought by your slave-catcher Jones on deck is not the most likely to make me a happier father, or my child a better daughter! I guess the whole batch of you are no better than Coast of Guinea niggers, who forget you are men, and let yourselves be whipped like boys. I expect, if that young chap of a skipper had touched me, it’s not Jonathan Corn-cob who would have failed to level him on that quarter-deck of his just as flat as any flapper’s tail in the high seas.”

“Then,” replied the gunner without altering his sanctified face, “you would have been hung to the fore yard-arm just as sure as your name is Jonathan Corn-cob! And what would have become of your precious soul,” said he, as his eyes went up to the carline of the deck above,—“your precious soul, Mr. Corn-cob?”

“I guess, if he had strung me up to the

fore yard-arm, as you call it, that there would have been more souls to have been looked after between that day and Easter. What right has any set of men to hang a fellow-creature? We are all men; and I calculate that if a man strikes me, it's the law of Nature that I should knock him down."

"Very likely, Mr. Corncob. Then come the articles of war, which next to the Bible I hold to be our best sailing directions. If you disobey the articles of war, you are convicted in this world; and if you disobey the Bible, you will be convicted in the next."

"That's long credit, Mr. Gunner; and if a person can 'weather the storm' here, he may trust to luck for the rest."

"To luck!" said the astonished gunner; "by the blessing of Him above, I will make you a sensible man before we part. This it is, Mr. Corncob: in your country you believe all men equal, whereas we have here just the contrary idea. Now, if all men were equal, how would you get your dinner dressed?—how would you get your land cultivated?—

how, in short, would you get any one thing done which you could not do yourself?"

"Why, I calculate, by paying for it: for money, I guess, is the grand leveller."

"It is just the contrary, I calculate," said the gunner: "for if you pay a man for his work, it argues two things: firstly, that you can command his services, which his poverty obliges him to give; and secondly, that he is above you in knowledge—at least, in the knowledge of that particular business for which you have engaged him. Now you see that there is a difference, and consequently no equality."

"Just the contrary I expect, Mr. Gunner: because if I'm above him in money and he's above me in knowledge, why two and two, I guess, make four; and that's equal all over the world."

"But, Mr. Corncob, if all the world was equal, we should all go barefooted; and in a ship there would be no master to navigate, no captain to command, no seaman to go aloft, no carpenter to swift the bars—"

"And," interrupted Corncob, "no pressed

men to run round like a horse in a mill. I expect, Mr. Gunner, you know more about your powder-boxes than you do about liberty and equality; and I say it is a right-down tar-nation shame that your boy should stand here to help you to swallow your dinner whilst he's as hungry as a shark."

"There's one bell, boy," said the gunner; "go up for the liquor:—it's not, Mr. Corncob, that I ever drink it myself, but I don't want others to forget their duty and become liberty-men. I tell you, Mr. Corncob, that if I can guess the character of our young captain, he won't let any man in this ship be his equal. Now, here's Mr. Weazel, a man who's been in Trafalgar, who sailed under Nelson,—we'll just put the question to him, and you will see what he says about the business.—Mr. Weazel," continued the gunner, "will you sit down on the corner of my chest there, and settle this question? Mr. Corncob says the world are all equal, but I say they are not: now just you give us your opinion upon it."

It was the custom of Weazel to pay the gun-

ner a regular visit about this hour, during which he allowed him to believe he was working his conversion whilst he drank his grog ; for Weazel used to remark, that if the gunner possessed an inward spirit, he had no occasion for grog.

“ Why,” said Weazel, as he helped himself, “ I think Mr. Corncob is right.”

“ No doubt of it, Mr. Weazel : and by way of being upon an equality with you, I’ll just trouble you for that case-bottle, because at present, I own, we are not.”

“ I wonder, Mr. Corncob, why you allowed the ship to sail and take you away from your family. Had I been you, I should have said, ‘ Captain Murray, if you think you are going to sell me for a nigger on the coast of Africa, you are mistaken !’ Now, as he has asked you to dinner, you ought to ask him in return.”

“ And I just calculate that I shall, Mr. Weazel.”

“ And as he has courted your acquaintance, I would be civil—it’s Christian-like to forgive injuries. When you see him on deck, walk

with him and be kind to him. He is rather reserved in his manner, and may appear shy ; but you will soon get over that, for which all sailors are rebuked. You can talk to him about America, and let him see you are not proud by your shaking hands with the quartermaster. I never saw a person so shocked as the captain was when he discovered that you were likely to be President of the United States : for as all are equal, you are as likely to be president as any one else. By-the-by, Corncob, I think you have not been quite so civil as you might have been in offering the captain some of your tobacco to chew."

"That's as true, I calculate, as that alligator's skin makes everlasting particular shoes ; but I'll not forget it. Now, I should be most particularly curious to know why I, Jonathan Corncob, with a whole pack of niggers, a schooner, and a store at Norfolk, aint every bit as good as Captain Murray?"

"And I should like to know why the niggers," said the gunner, "are not as good as you?"

“Why, because I bought them, to be sure: they’re the same to me as my cattle; and I should as soon think of putting a cow in corduroy breeches as clapping a pair of shoes on a nigger’s hoof. I tell you, Mr. Gunner, you don’t understand argufying a difficult question.”

“Oh, then, I am not equal to you in sense?”

“No, I calculate you are not: your ’cute-ness will never blind even a buskin. May I be most particularly kicked to death by mosquitoes if I don’t think you would swim all day amongst alligators without finding out they had scales on their backs! — ay, Mr. Weazel?”

“Ah!” said Weazel as he finished the gunner’s allowance, “it’s quite astonishing how blind some men are! It’s as plain as a pikestaff that we are all equal excepting niggers, and that you and I are just as good as either captain or first lieutenant.”

“Mr. Weazel,” said a quartermaster, popping his head inside the gunner’s cabin, “Mr.

Jones desires you'll go on deck this instant, and hopes he shall not have to send for you twice."

Up jumped Weazel in a trice ; whilst the gunner smiling, said, "There's a proof of liberty and equality, Mr. Corncob ! Don't you mind what he says : he is as full of mischief as the devil himself. Take my advice—read this book : in it you will learn obedience to those placed in authority over you ; and you will see that if every one was equal, you would not be able to grow tobacco."

As the gunner at two bells went on deck to do his duty, Corncob stretched himself on the chest and fell fast asleep ; whilst Weazel, his imagination being excited by the grog, endeavoured to find out some trick which would create a good laugh.

Corncob slept soundly, forgetting half his miseries since he was allowed a life of idleness ; and being naturally a very easy fellow, he began to think his fate not quite so bad, and that he might see a new part of the world before he returned to Portsmouth.

In days past, marines wore tails. They did not grow from their heads, but they had regulation tails, made of whalebone covered with a tuft of hair at the end. They had fair and foul weather tails ; and as the breeze blew, so they took a reef in their tails, or shifted them altogether, like a storm main-topsail. Corncob soon had one of the small tails appended to his collar ; but the tie was of similar magnificence to the fastenings of the tail in a Spanish colonel's horse : Corncob's tie was an exuberance of bunting most fantastically arranged.

The weather being very fine, the trifling motion of the frigate nursed him to sleep : the gunner's grog, with a plentiful allowance from some reserved case-bottles, had bewildered Corncob, who slept soundly until one bell after four o'clock. Then Weazel appeared with his side-arms and cocked-hat ; and having restored the senses of the American by a somewhat rough shake, he began, " Mr. Corncob, Mr. Jones has desired me to speak to you on a subject of some importance, with which I beg to engage your undivided attention."

Corncob gave an American sigh which was strong enough to upset a jolly boat.

“Captain Murray is well aware,” continued Weazel, “that you possess the spirit and the integrity of your countrymen, and being a free man, would not like to go to prison.”

“Ay, but I calculate that I’m a prisoner slick enough just now.”

“If you call being amongst friends being in a prison, perhaps your remark might be admitted to be true. But Captain Murray looks at the subject in a different light: he wishes to know if, in the event of our falling in with a French frigate, you would prefer a post of honour and command, to skulking below with the doctor in the cockpit, holding the fag end of a broken arm whilst the surgeons cut it off from the stem. As he wishes you to make your own choice, he has deputed me to mention the subject, being well aware that an American—one belonging to that great nation—would only be insulted if he were *desired* to go below in security when his comrades were in danger upon deck.”

“Your captain’s a man, I expect,” said Corncob; “upright and downright, like a donkey’s fore-leg; no skulking about like a strayed nigger in a bush, all blazing and fire like a pine lath, and as straightforward as a fox’s tail. I guess he’s made no mistake in his man; for although I’m not half horse, half alligator, like a Backwoodsman, wherever the danger is, I calculate there you’ll find Jonathan Corncob. I don’t know much about a ship, but I can gallop along the decks like an Indian in a forest; and therefore, with all due thanks for your captain’s kindness, you may tell him that I shall be by his side,—for he will be in the thick of them, I calculate.”

“You have justly estimated the captain’s character, Mr. Corncob: he is under some obligations to you for your hospitable treatment of one of his and my old messmates, and therefore he has desired me to offer you the command of the horse-marines. Although at present, of course, a dismounted corps, yet they are so called because in the event of landing they become the cavalry, if horses can be found

for them. I am desirous to offer you a uniform, which your servant, one of your own corps, will bring you directly: we shall beat to quarters in about twenty minutes, and your station will be on the quarter-deck near the captain. You need not change your coat; but it would be better if you put on your boots and spurs, which your servant has prepared, in order to show the men what command you hold. I will lend you a cocked-hat with the proper cockade, and you will do famously."

From the time Corncob had mentioned to Murray the circumstance of his having befriended Hammerton, he had perceived the very marked difference of manner in both officers and men: he had been released from his slavery, had dined with the captain, had drunk grog in the gun-room, and had expressed a wish that he might be stationed in some post of danger in the event of a fight. Weazel had taken the hint from this, and followed it up well. The marine who brought the well-cleaned boots wore also himself a pair of boots and spurs; and Corncob, from the sub-

servient manner of his *valet de place*, believed he was acting rightly and respectfully to the men with whom he had to serve. His toilette was completed just as the drum beat to quarters, and a minute or two was allowed to elapse before he was told that the tune just played, "Come, cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer," was the air which summoned him to take his station on the quarter-deck: and accordingly Jonathan Corncob, in a pair of old top-boots, spurs, striped jean trousers, a yellow waistcoat, with a blue coat, cocked-hat, and regulation tail, having swung round him a ship's cutlass, walked on deck, and crossing over to windward, thus announced himself to Captain Murray:

"Well, captain, here I am, I expect, booted and spurred, and ready to stand by you if the Frenchmen come even as thick as mosquitoes on a damp evening in Maryland. I'm told this is my station by your side, and here by God I'll stick as close as cobbler's wax to cobbler's twine!"

Mr. Jones had been attending to his quarters,

seeing that the men were sober and all present, and consequently did not see Corncob, who cut a more ridiculous figure behind than he did before ; for the tie of his tail hung down to his stern-post, and was done up of all the colours of the flags allowed in his Majesty's ships. There was a titter fore and aft, but not a man dared laugh — the Arethusa was in much too high a state of discipline for that.

Captain Murray looked at him, eyed him from head to foot, and then said, " Pray, Mr. Corncob, what situation do you intend to hold, by wearing that dress ?"

" Captain, I calculate, of the horse-marines. I can ride, I expect, anything between a donkey and an elephant ; and as for shooting, I guess I could knock a man's eyebrow off without touching the skin at seventy yards."

" Go below, Mr. Corncob," said Murray, scarcely able to refrain from laughing : " we shall not want your corps to-day."

" Go below, captain ! not I ; I'm not a man to hold the fag end of a sailor's arm whilst the

surgeon cuts it off at the stem. Jonathan Corncob has been shot at often enough on shore, and cares no more for the whiz of a ball than he does for the buzz of a humming-bird."

"Then, Mr. Corncob, I must desire you to go below : some one has made a fool of you, and dressed you up in a manner more likely to be serviceable in one of Richardson's booths at Portsdown fair than on the quarter-deck of the *Arethusa*."

"I heard you were shy, captain ; but never mind, I expect before long you will have rubbed off your modesty. Why, dang it, man ! we are all equal : why should you feel so overcome-like by seeing one near you who will protect you ? I'll stick by you, I tell you, foul wind or fair wind—blow high, blow low ; and when you dine with me to-morrow, I'll show you what a friend I am when I set about it."

Captain Murray, seeing that the American had got this crotchet into his head, called Mr. Jones, told him to send Mr. Corncob below ;

and by the help of a party of marines he was placed in the gunner's cabin and divested of his tom-foolery.

At quarters Murray manifested his intention of doing away as far as possible with a part of the idlers. The marine officers were desired to keep watch, to take the first and middle watches by turns: this did not suit their notions, and they remonstrated. Murray was quite prepared for the objection, and insisted upon one of the marine officers going round the decks every half-hour to report that all was safe below, and that when the watch were required to effect any manœuvre, they were to see the marines worked at the rope.

This order, unusual, it is true, was not likely to make the young captain much beloved by the marine officers; still the order was sullenly and silently obeyed.

“ Reef topsails, Mr. Jones,” said the captain. The hands were turned up, and Murray with his watch in his hand stood close to the binnacle. The weather was calm, and the reef taken in and topsails at the mast-head within the

minute. "Reef topsails again, Mr. Jones : I must have it done in less than forty-five seconds this evening, or I shall go on all night until it is done. Forty-six seconds," he said, as the topsail-halyards were belayed. "Shake both reefs out, Mr. Jones, and try it again. Forty-four seconds," said Captain Murray : "I thought we should manage it within the time. Before we have been a week at sea, it will be done in thirty seconds."

"Well, I calculate," said Corncob, who had broken adrift from his confinement and got on deck, as he stood by the side of the captain, "that is tarnation smart work, and beats monkeys in cocoa-nut trees to eternal shivers."

Captain Murray did not dislike the compliment, although he wished Mr. Corncob elsewhere.

"Here, captain," said Corncob, "take a quid : it 's real Virginia cut—it will do you good, and help to get over the shyness. Why, you 're as coy of a man as a black-foot Indian is of a mosquito !"

Captain Murray walked below, and sending

for Mr. Jones, desired Corncob might be taught naval manners, and made acquainted that any indiscretion in the way of drunkenness would be, in spite of his situation, most severely punished. Jones took the affair in hand kindly, and Corncob was soon convinced that he had been hoaxed, that the gunner was his best friend, and that Weazel was nothing more or less than the devil in uniform.

In spite of all Corncob's growing respect for the captain,—for he easily perceived that all on board bowed to him, young as he was,—the American, although gradually becoming more and more a convert to discipline, could not entirely eradicate his early notions of liberty and equality. Although it was evident, even to his not unprejudiced mind, that where one commanded and the rest obeyed there was more order and regularity, more concentration of power, more effective force, than in the disjointed efforts of an undisciplined band; and although Jonathan Corncob often administered the lash on the backs of his niggers, yet he shrunk at the very notion of there being any

inequality between white men. The gunner gradually enlightened his mind, and kept him from sporting those republican notions which tend to disorganise society on shore, and are sure to ruin discipline on board.

CHAPTER III.

A Chase.

THE Arethusa had cleared the Channel, and was in the Bay of Biscay, when she encountered one of those furious gales of wind creating enormous seas, which poets have dignified as “rolling mountains.” A frigate well managed with good sea-room, is however as safe to its inhabitants as a cradle rocked by a careful nurse to the babe within. The ship mounts the wave, —tops it, falls gradually down into the vale beneath, and so continues until the wind and sea subside.

On shore, woe betide the poor fellow who passes along a narrow street in a storm ! Tiles, chimney-pots, leads, come sweeping along the narrow pathway, dealing wounds and destruc-

tion. In the fields, the trees are torn up ; upon the road, the passing vehicle is upset.—And so said Tom Turner, the captain of the forecastle, to a knot of seamen who crowded round him as the *Arethusa* was rolling over the high seas of the Bay of Biscay.

“ I tell you, boys,” said he, “ that them poor devils on shore are always in danger : they can’t go from home to buy a pound of pigtail without being fired at from the roofs of the houses, or being jammed to death by a capsized cart, and the cargo falling upon them. No, no, my lads ! here we are in a fine stiff breeze, with only a close-reefed maintop-sail and fore-stay-sail set : the higher it blows, the steadier we remain ; and as we have nothing to do in the shape of work, we can pass our lives merrily, and sing a song or two to the honour of our frigate, which, if I don’t mistake, has got just as noble a captain as ever swam.”

“ He does not send out much of his fresh meat to the sick, though ; and when, the other day, Bill Halliday was near giving us the slip, and getting discharged dead on the books, the

steward would not give a drop of wine out of a nearly-emptied decanter, because he said he had seen the captain, when the officers were gone, pouring it out into a tumbler to measure it, and then clapping it back into the bottle. He may be a devil to fight ; but he 'll never pay much to paint the ship : and if we get a little black outside with a Frenchman, and knocked about on board, I 'm blessed if we shan't come out in a new suit of dock-yard yellow !”

“ Why, he got the purser to give the Yankee a coat, although he might have rigged him out from clew to earring himself.”

“ All the better, boys, for us !” said the first speaker. “ If he 's so precious fond of money, he won't let a strange sail pass without overhauling her ; and when he gets paid himself, he 'll take care we get our share also.—Let 's see,” continued the old tar : “ sailed on a Wednesday ; that 's a lucky day, although I don't think the officers of the jollies like it : there they walk the deck as stiff as a midshipman on half-pay. I thought he would make them do something for their money !”

“ Well,” said another, “ it’s all right enough : every man to his station, and the cook to the fore-sheet. I fancy, from the ‘ reef topsails’ the other night, we shall all be known according to our qualifications, as the purser’s steward says. That fellow launches more long-winded names than can be found in the open list of a three-decker ! Well, it’s an ill wind which blows nobody good ; and the smarter the officer, the more justice is done to the active man. Come, Tom, give us a song : if the wind does not get in your throat and blow the words about, you’re just the man that can turn a stave. Let’s have that one about the Arethusa and the frigates, you know, when the jolly craft tackled three of them.”

Tom Turner here cleared his voice, which was as rough as the links of a chain-pump ; and after clapping his quid in his pocket to keep it warm until he wanted it again, he sang the old song,

“ Come, all ye jolly sailors bold,
Whose hearts are cast in honour’s mould,
Whilst English glory I unfold—
Hurrah for the Arethusa !

She is a frigate stout and brave
As ever stemm'd the dashing wave ;
Her men are staunch to the favourite launch ;
And when the foe shall meet her fire,
Sooner than strike we 'll all expire,
On board of the Arethusa.

'Twas with the spring fleet she went out,
The English Channel to cruise about,
When three French ships in sight so stout
Bore down on the Arethusa.

The captain hail'd them, Hoh ! ahoy !—”

“ A light on the weather-bow !” said the look-out-man forward. The song was instantly stopped, and one of the ring jumped aft. The wind blew so strong that the voice was with difficulty heard ; but the officer of the watch was apprised of the stranger being in sight.

“ Jump down, youngster, into the captain's cabin, and bring up the night-glass. And if the captain asks you, tell him that there is a light seen on the weather-bow ; but that as yet I have not made it out.”

The officer of the watch now stood upon the foremast quarter-deck carronade slide ; and

when the *Arethusa* rose to the sea, he caught a glimpse of the light. The bearings were instantly taken, and the watch turned up to make sail. As the *Arethusa* was hove to in the gale, coming up and falling off, the stranger appeared one moment broad on the weather-bow, and the next nearly ahead. It was with great difficulty she was caught in the field of the night-glass; and it was more of a guess than a certainty that the stranger was a large ship running before the wind under her topsails and foresail.

No sooner was Captain Murray apprised of this than he was on deck. Naturally sanguine, and eager to show the Admiralty that they had not confided the *Arethusa* to one likely to be a discredit to the service, he was resolved, even if the stranger had been an eighty-gun ship, to try his men and his metal against the superior force. At first the wind and the spray prevented his seeing the stranger; and it was not until the *Arethusa* came up to the wind, and the light was seen on the *lee*-bow, that it became evident the lieutenant was right in his guess, and that

the vessel, whether friend or foe, was running before the wind. There was, however, a doubt if the light seen was the same as had been previously discovered, and no orders were given to make sail until after a lapse of some minutes; when, in a hurried glimpse of moonlight, the vessel herself was seen on the lee-bow.

“Turn the hands up—make sail,” said Captain Murray: “set the foresail, and keep her away four or five points. Tell the carpenter to see the firescreens all ready: and, youngster, tell the master I want him immediately.”

Mr. Jones, a smart, active officer, was soon on deck and took command. The captain desired him to set the fore and mizen topsails, and to get everything ready for action, but on no account to cast loose any of the guns. “Stow the hammocks, Mr. Jones,” he continued as he went below to his cabin followed by the master.

The chart was soon on the table; the compasses and the parallel rulers were in requisition; the distance of the frigate from the lighthouse of Cordovan was measured; and the swing-

ing compass overhead pointed out that the Arethusa, if she kept two more points away, would be running directly for that place, being distant from it two hundred miles.

“What do you think she can be?” asked the captain.

“She must be either a French frigate steering for the lighthouse, or an American ship making a run to Bordeaux.”

“Either would do for us,” said the captain, rubbing his hands; “but if she gives us a hard run, we shall get on a lee-shore: we must therefore carry all sail we can bear, and endeavour to bring her to, or to action, before daylight. At the rate we are going now, which, I should fancy, cannot be less than ten knots, we shall by eight o’clock to-morrow morning have neared the land to one hundred miles; and if the gale blows home to the shore, we should find ourselves quite near enough at that distance.”

Mr. Stowage, who was a rough seaman, merely remarked, as he rolled the chart up, that the stranger must be a good sailer to outspeed

the Arethusa ; but that under any circumstance, with the gale so heavy as it then was, it would be imprudent to venture nearer the land than eighty miles.

The first pipe of the boatswain's mate was heard, in spite of the creak of the ship as she surged over to leeward in the gale ; and every man fore and aft was instantly on the alert. Sailors, from long custom, awake to the minute when their watch begins, and their ears are always susceptible enough to catch any unusual sound between the eight bells of one watch and the eight bells of the next.

“ Tumble up, every mother's son of you, fore and aft !” said the boatswain, as he ran under the hammocks, lifting some out as he raised his back, and shaking every lazy fellow as he trotted along : “ Tumble up, there—make sail !” The first order was followed by the pipe of the boatswain's mate at the main hatchway, which was answered by the boatswain on the lower deck. “ Up all hammocks — heave out and lash up, my lads—look alive !”

“ Call the drummer, there, below !”

Every man knew at once that he was wanted to beat to quarters ; and it required no words of the boatswain to hasten the men : regular good seamen, ripe and ready for any action, they were quick enough, and in an incredibly short time, the lower deck was clear, the *Arethusa* under her treble-reefed topsails and reefed courses, with the wind abaft the beam, going at the rate of twelve knots an hour in chase of the stranger.

Although hope is ever alive in the hearts of seamen, and, like the rest of the world, they are willing to believe that which they most wish ; yet, sanguine as every man fore and aft the ship was, it was but too evident they did not near the chase. She was right ahead ; and as now and then the thick clouds blew clear of the moon, she was seen staggering under the same sail as her pursuer, and steering a steady course for Cordovan lighthouse. Every eye was directed towards the stranger ; and to the constant, almost momentary question of “ Do we near her ? ” the same answer was given : “ Yes, sir—yes ; coming up fast ! ” Stowage

the master, and the gunner, were the only two who put a decided negative on the question; the first saying that a dollar split into bits would occupy all the space the *Arethusa* had neared the chase, and the gunner murmuring, “Truth is truth!—we rather drop astern than forge ahead.”

“I calculate,” said Corncob,—who, although Weazel had endeavoured to persuade him that he might when the hammocks were stowed, being a passenger, lie down on the captain’s sofa, had been one of the most vigilant,—“that trying to catch that frigate is like trying to hold on a nigger on a hot day: he’s sure to slip through your fingers.”

These discouraging intimations agreed but indifferently with the sanguine mind of Murray. To have fought an action in his new command was the object nearest his heart. But now came all the horrors of a leeward shore: the gale, far from diminishing, seemed to increase as they neared the land, and it was hopeless endeavouring to creep off the shore; for the

ship, had she been rounded to, must have been placed under her storm-stay-sails.

“ I ’m blessed,” said Tom Turner, “ if ever I have seen the light yet ! and I think we are chasing the fore-topmast staysail sheet block, which is dangling about there like a purser’s shirt on the clothes-lines.”

“ How many bells is it ?” asked Captain Murray.

“ Past six, sir,” was the reply.

“ How many knots are we going ?”

“ Twelve and a half, sir.”

“ Mr. Stowage, see how many miles we have run since we bore up.”

The master went under the half-deck, and there added up from the log-board the distance run, and reported that the ship had already run sixty-six miles, and that four more might be allowed for the heave of the sea.

Murray was a young captain, and he began to be slightly fearful of the heavy responsibility he incurred. Walking aft with Mr. Stowage, he asked his opinion in an open man-

ner, for he was not ashamed of confessing that he had some fearful apprehensions of a lee-shore.

“It is beyond a doubt, Mr. Stowage,” he said, “that we do not near the chase; and if I had not seen her myself, and made out during a glimpse of moonlight the very sail she was under, I should be inclined to yield to Turner’s opinion, that we were chasing the fore-topmast staysail sheet block, instead of a French frigate, so exactly does she appear to me to keep her distance. We have yet three hours to daylight; by that time we shall be within ninety miles of the land. The gale increases, and I see no chance of its diminishing.”

“I can give my opinion,” said Mr. Stowage, “without being afraid of any man’s saying I did it from fear; and I do so now fearlessly. As master of the ship, I consider it my duty to point out the danger in nearly the same words you have used: but if I could shut my eyes a little, I should like to go on until daylight, and have one shot at that long-legged frigate; for she is the first that ever held way with the *Arethusa*.”

“ Then you consider it imprudent to continue the chase, Mr. Stowage ? ”

“ I think, sir, we might try it an hour longer.”

“ Very well,” said the captain ; “ we will stand on. But I should like to prick her off on the chart. Come below, Mr. Stowage.”

The point of the compasses was soon placed on the spot : the ship would be embayed by daylight, and no power could have crept her off. Murray had some fearful remembrances of the Tribune : the awful roll of the surge came upon his ear with a kind of death-howl ; the desperate struggles of the drowning crew were plainly before his eyes, the men fighting against a certain death ; and all the horrors of that dreadful event came as a warning to him to forego the fame which might be acquired, and the money which might be his. This last was the bitterest of all : he saw that his men—nay, himself, might be sacrificed to the love of money and ambition. Again he walked forward on the fore-castle ; he took the night-glass from the midshipman

whose duty it was to keep his eyes upon the chase ; he felt the fresh gale which blew from the foresail ; he saw his ship flying before the wind like a scared bird ; and at every surge of the Arethusa, as the foam was driven on before her, he felt a sickness of heart, which he knew did not arise from fear of anything but a shipwreck. It was impossible for him ever to forget what was so indelibly stamped upon his memory.

Murray argued with himself, “ If I round to now, and give up the pursuit, my men, who hardly know me by sight, will attribute it perhaps to cowardice.” The very thought nearly suffocated him. “ I will act for the best, according to my opinion,” thought he ; “ and will not allow any apprehensions of expressions, however disagreeable to my feelings, to sway me in my duty.”

“ We do not near her an inch,” he said, addressing the midshipman. “ Do *you* see her plainer than you did ?”

“ No, sir : on the contrary, I begin to think she draws away from us.”

“ I expect it ’s the sea-serpent,” said Corn-cob ; “ and if you make the tail by daylight, you ’ll have to go a hundred miles before you get upon its broadside ! I calculate it ’s either the Flying Dutchman, or the devil on an alligator cutting off his scales to make fire-proof shoes !”

“ Do you think, Turner,” said Captain Murray, “ that we near her ?”

Turner took off his hat, and replied, “ Not a fathom, sir, since we bore up.”

Mr. Jones came forward : he was of the same opinion.

“ It ’s confoundedly against my inclination ; but it must be done ! Shorten sail, Mr. Jones ; furl everything ; round to on the starboard tack, and put her under the fore and main stay-sail and trysails : mind what you are about in rounding her to.”

“ Hands, shorten sail !” cried Mr. Jones.

Every sail was reduced in a seamanlike manner ; and watching a time when the sea was more moderate in its height, Mr. Jones ordered the master to round her gently to. The man

at the helm hardly put the wheel two spokes a-lee ; the frigate flew up to the wind ; and in spite of the master's warning voice, who, standing on the gangway, saw that a sea would strike her before she had her bow to it, and had cried out, " Right the helm !" a tremendous sea came foaming and towering along, burst right on her beam, and spent its whole force on the broadside of the Arethusa. The ship shook fore and aft as if she had struck the bottom ; the bulwark by the main-channels was washed away so far as to endanger the mainmast, and the mainmast itself was supposed to be sprung ; the foremost quarter-deck carronade broke adrift ; four men were washed overboard. It was a moment of considerable anxiety. Mr. Stowage called out that the ship must be wore instantly, to save the mainmast ; whilst some anxiety was expressed by the carpenter in regard to the injury.

In the confusion which occurred, the captain was missing : but he was heard in the larboard-quarter boat, where he had jumped, and was urging the men to their utmost. He seemed

suddenly to recollect that he was the captain, and required to give the orders ; he left the boat, resolved at all hazards to make an attempt to save the poor fellows. The first lieutenant strongly urged him to relinquish the rash desire ; the sea ran high, and if the mainmast fell, more men must be sacrificed.

In the mean time, the confusion increased. The gunner had secured his lost gun to leeward, which, fortunately, had brought itself up by running against its opposite neighbour ; and when Corncob tumbled in amongst the men, saying, " Where can I be of service ?" he received the consolatory answer, " At your prayers !"

The men who had gathered abaft held the boat's tackle clear for running, whilst some strained their eyes on the weather quarter to look for their lost shipmates.

" Hold on—hold on the boat !" roared Mr. Jones ; " no boat can live in this sea."

" All ready for lowering !" screamed Weazel, whose voice hardly reached the deck, so high was the wind.

Not a trace could be seen of the poor fellows ;

the loud-bellowing sea breaking into foam lighted up the ocean, but not a mark was visible — no hat floated to give a hope, and the wide and wild surge sung the death-song of these seamen so suddenly snatched away.

Murray turned his eyes away, for he could no longer see, and reproached his men: “Had I not been captain, and my presence was required here, I had been there!” and he pointed to the boat.

There were volunteers even then. “I’ll go, sir!” said Turner.—“I’m ready!” said Smith.—“And I! and I!” said others.

“Let’s have one good try,” said Weazel: “we can but be drowned; and my promotion is running to leeward!”

It was useless now. The boiling surf had long since overpowered the strongest, or the spray blown from the top of the sea would have drowned them. They were gone — lost for ever, without an effort to save them — snatched from their companions, and in the pride and prime of life hurried into eternity.

“Hands, wear ship!” was now heard. The

fore and mizen topsails had been furled : but the men had been called down from the main rigging, and the topsail flapped in spite of the buntlines and clewlines, until it split to ribbons, and was blown in fragments to leeward. The fore-staysail was run up, and the Arethusa's head paid off to the breeze.

“ Keep every man clear of the mainmast,” said Murray ; “ and let the carpenter and his crew come aft with their axes. If it goes at all, Mr. Stowage, it will be when we are before the wind.”

The old sailor nodded his head, but did not return an answer. Again the frigate forged ahead, and the remnant of the maintop-sail, with the courses, caught the wind. She was now before it ; and Mr. Stowage might have been seen with his eyes fixed aloft, and grasping more firmly the stanchions of the hammock-netting as he watched with impatient glance for the ship to roll back and regain her equilibrium.

Murray stood by the capstan. There was a cool disregard of danger in his manner as he

walked to the main-bits, and giving the star-board fore-brace into the hands of his men, he stood on the larboard side to ease off the lee-brace as the head-yards were rounded in.

“ By your leave, sir,” said the captain of the after-guard — “ this is my station ; and Mr. Jones did not place me here to hold on the slack of a rope in fine weather !”

The ship at this time rolled heavily over, and some one called out, “ Stand clear of the mainmast !” The captain felt himself rudely pushed away from the bits, and the old sailor held the brace, which he slackened as coolly as if he were working into Spithead in a moderate breeze. Carefully was she rounded to on the larboard tack ; she rose beautifully to the sea, and by five o’clock the mainmast had been secured by the runners and tackles. Hawser were passed round the mast-head and hove taut ; the hammocks were down, and half the crew asleep.

The gunner was the only man who denied himself the blessings of repose. His swinging light might be seen surging over from side to side as the ship rolled ; and he might be per-

ceived in earnest prayers, and heard returning thanks for his own safety, and praying that those who had been swept from the living might not die the death eternal.

Heavily passed the rest of the night with Murray :—Some of his shipmates had perished ; whilst the remainder, who looked to their captain and stood prepared to obey every order, might be brought, if the gale continued, to the same untimely end, or walked as prisoners to a French garrison.

CHAPTER IV.

A Fight.

THE lowering morning at last dawned; and daylight was no sooner established, than the carpenter was seen mounting the main rigging to examine the mast. On his arrival at the catharping legs, he saw the gunner, who was ever at his post, overhauling the main-yard. It was soon ascertained that the mainmast was sprung, and it became requisite to secure it more effectually. For this purpose the top-gallant mast and maintop-sail yard were got on deck—the maintop-mast was struck, and rendered into a powerful fish by being lashed to the mainmast.

The wind increased as the sun rose, the fiery appearance of the clouds augured no

favourable change, and the Arethusa was rolling heavily on the sea as she drifted every hour nearer the land.

Various were the opinions on board the ship as to the conduct of Captain Murray. The marine officers curled their lips as they spoke of the smart captain : one, indeed, said, " Had he commanded, the Arethusa would have run the stranger on shore, if it had ended in the loss of his own ship."

" I am not sorry, Mr. Stowage, that I gave up the chase when I did," said Captain Murray. " Had there been no harbour open for her, I should have deemed it my duty to have insured her loss at any risk : but to run after a vessel which can enter a friendly port, whilst the only chance left to the pursuer would be the choice of evils, either a shipwreck or a prison, would be the height of rashness, and savour of madness."

" If this gale continues, sir, we shall have enough to do to save the frigate. Supposing we only drift two knots to leeward in the hour, by this time to-morrow we shall be on shore :

at present, carrying sail is impossible ; if the worst comes to the worst, we must run into the Garonne."

Captain Murray turned away from the plain-spoken Mr. Stowage, and taking Mr. Jones abaft, he asked the names of the men washed overboard, and if they were married.

"Poor fellows! poor fellows!" he murmured. —"Oh! I thought I had forgotten something. Send the captain of the after-guard aft—the man who was stationed to attend the fore-braces."

The sailor came aft, and Captain Murray addressed him. "I allowed your conduct last night to go unobserved, and I have forgotten your insolence in your courage. You were one of the men in the boat also. I shall give you a better rating on the first opportunity: and mind, sir, the next time you wish your captain to move, even if the mainmast is falling, touch your hat when you speak to him. That will do."

During the whole day the gale continued; but at sunset the squalls came less frequently,

and the scud aloft flew in a more southerly direction. The reefed foresail, close-reefed fore and mizen-top sails were set, and Mr. Stowage began to rub his hands and look more pleased. The Arethusa ultimately weathered the danger; and the wind having become fair for Gibraltar, Captain Murray steered for that port, and anchored therein.

No sooner was the ship at anchor than Mr. Corncob was sent for. He was told that he had better take a passage in the packet, which was to sail the next day. "Take care," added Murray, "how you walk about Gosport again with nothing but a stick for a protection!"

"That's all particularly pleasant, I calculate," said Jonathan; "and I guess I shan't be unhappy to get along again out of this infernal fix, where one day a man's made captain of the horse-marines, and the next told that there is as much difference between a captain of a ship and Jonathan Corncob as there is between the President of the United States and a nigger. Ah! Weazel, I reckon,

is a sensible chap; he is the only man who could make that straight-haired gunner understand, that a man who has two legs and arms is no better than his neighbour.—But, captain, I calculate it 's all well enough to talk about packets; but packets don't take passengers without being paid: so, if you are the man I take you for, shell out the dollars, and trust Jonathan Corneob; he won't sleep in Portsmouth one night before he 's cleared the score, with five per cent. interest."

"I 'll endeavour to get you a passage in a man-of-war," said Murray, the old complaint still sticking to him.

"But I reckon I don't like your men-of-war," said Corneob; "for if I had not just by accident mentioned Mr. Hammerton's name, I calculate—ay, captain?" and here he made an intelligible sign in reference to gratings and cat-o'-nine tails.

"Well, well," said Murray, "we will see about it: but I suggested the man-of-war because there you would have gone free of all expense."

“Tarnation particularly take expense ! I guess I’m a man who can count dollars in bags ; and if I dip my hand in, I calculate my head will find means to fill it again. I won’t go in a man-of-war ; and if you don’t like to lend me the money, I dare say your steward—we are all equal, you know—will not be quite so nice.”

This was a regular hard hit, and Murray felt it. He himself, however, was determined not to pay ; so he drew a bill upon his father for thirty pounds, and told Jonathan any one would cash it on shore.

Although Murray had conquered his bitterness of feeling to a great extent against Hamerton ever since he had fallen in love with his sister, yet he could not overcome his love of money, or his fear of parting with it by any act of his own. He was aware of the meanness ; but it had grown with his growth, and had become perfectly rooted.

Corncob took a kind leave of all—he shook hands with every man fore and aft, from the captain to the sweeper, and gave them all

invitations to his house in Virginia : before he sailed, he had paid his passage-money, and given all but a couple of pounds amongst his old shipmates. “I calculate,” said he, “that you are all a proper set of men, with no more fear about you than a monkey in a cocoa-nut tree. There’s something to remember the man you pressed; and although we have not had a smooth passage, or turkeys and ham to eat, yet I’ve seen enough to know an English seaman, and to love him as much as my own brother.” And as he went over the side, a tear filled the generous fellow’s eyes.—Murray wrote home to his father by the packet, and desired a fonder remembrance than usual to Amelia.

At Gibraltar the *Arethusa* was repaired, all deficiencies made good, and she was once more in a state of efficiency. The packet sailed—*Corncob* had got upon the wide Atlantic; and the senior officer, having some need of a frigate elsewhere, despatched the *Arethusa* to Malta.

Previous to Murray's sailing, he made many inquiries concerning the loss of the Rover. Nothing certain was known about it at Gibraltar ; but the conjecture was, that she had been captured by an Algerine—that she was much too fine a vessel to have been capsized in a white squall ; and had she been wrecked, some tidings of the melancholy event must have reached Gibraltar. But one circumstance was communicated which gave Murray much pleasure: it was the remark of a trading captain to his employer, who mentioned having met at Smyrna a smart-looking craft engaged in the same trade as his own ; and after giving some opinion as to the success of her voyage, he added, “If we had not heard the Rover had been burnt, I could have sworn to her build, although the figure-head has been altered.”

This conversation, which had been related by the merchant to him, afforded Murray an excellent opportunity of writing to Amelia. He did so ; and by way of filling up his letter and making it more palatable, he dressed up

the story of the horse-marines, with a few additions, to cheer the dinner-party of Sir Hector.

The Arethusa arrived at Malta. The commander-in-chief was at the time off Toulon, and she was despatched off Cape Secie in order to meet him. As the admiral himself intended cruising off the port for some time, Captain Murray received orders to cruise off Naples for three months, and then return, after having provisioned at Malta, to Port Mahon.

She arrived off her station. Captain Murray, a young officer, eager to distinguish himself, and knowing the power of boats when night conceals the force and renders it difficult for the attacked party to make a sure resistance, was constantly on the alert to annoy the enemy. No vessel coasted in security along the shore, and the fort of Terracina more than once had fired into the frigate. Every prize captured only made the captain more anxious for another: in secret he counted his money; and as his avaricious disposition increased, while he calculated his increase

of wealth, he grew the more niggardly to himself, although to his officers his table was ever open.

On the 17th of April 1806, the *Arethusa* was six or seven leagues to the westward of Civita Vecchia, when a small boat was discovered to leeward. As the wind was fresh, the frigate soon came up with her, indeed she never attempted to escape, but pulled towards the *Arethusa*. There were only three men in her: two pulled, the third steered; and this last ascended the side, and walking over to Captain Murray, produced a paper, which after he had read, he desired the stranger to walk below to his cabin.

This man was a spy — one who had often escaped the death he merited as a traitor. Paid well by the British Government, through some of the officers on the station, he risked his life to give information tending to ruin those with whom he resided in amity and good-fellowship. In the present instance, he gave information that a French flotilla were to sail that morning from Civita Vecchia bound

to Naples ; and that if the Arethusa stood at once for Naples, she would cut them off. The spy further added, that he would rather be left in his boat than towed by the frigate ; as, when night fell, he knew of a sheltered cove where he could land in security. A certificate was given as to the intelligence, and the boat of the traitor shoved off ; whilst the Arethusa, under a crowd of sail, stood in-shore towards Naples.

At a quarter past four P. M. the man at the mast-head reported several vessels under the land. They soon proved to be the objects of pursuit : one vessel, ship-rigged, appeared a formidable vessel ; there were three brig-corvettes, a bombard, a cutter, and three gun-ketches. As the frigate neared the flotilla, the immense disparity of force became evident ; the larger vessel was made out to be a large corvette ; and when one of the marine officers hinted that there were a good number of them, Murray remarked, “ The more the better : they are but small craft.”

“ Ah !” answered the first speaker, “ the Lilliputians overcame Gulliver.”

“Nonsense!” said Murray.—“Mr. Jones, send every man aft.” When they were assembled, Murray thus addressed them :

“My lads, I was in hopes to have run you alongside the French frigate in the Bay of Biscay ; and most fortunate it was for us that I relinquished that which was my greatest ambition. The wind this time appears to favour us. We have some work before us ; but I know that in this ship every man will do his duty as becomes an English seaman. I shall do mine by placing you in the midst of the enemy, and leave it to your gallantry and good conduct to get me out again with some prizes fast to the tow-rope.—Beat to quarters, drummer.—Mr. Jones, pay attention that everything is in its place.”

“The flotilla, sir,” said the officer of the watch, “has formed a line and hove-to.”

“Give me the glass.—Mr. Stowage,” said Murray.

“Sir,” answered the master.

“Take good bearings of the mouth of the Tiber ; those vessels are at least two leagues from the shore, and, I think, hovering about that

shoal we noticed last evening : let me know if I am right. Egad !” he continued, talking aloud, “ they offer battle nobly : what a set of little dirty boats to fire on a frigate ! Let me see— I must go in ahead of the ship-corvette, and astern of her second ahead. We will take these two first ; and if the rest only wait and amuse themselves by firing at us until we have succeeded in the first attempt, I will answer for it none of those lads dance at the Carnival this year !”

The flotilla at a quarter before seven o’clock opened their fire. The water was as smooth as a mirror ; and the steady aim taken, with the determined appearance of the flotilla, made one or two who calculated chances more than prize-money look a little doubtful as to the result. “ If the wind falls,” says one, “ we shall be in a nice predicament !—close to the shore, surrounded by a flotilla, night coming on, the calm almost certain.”

Murray walked up and down the deck a little quicker than usual ; and as the grape and canister rattled aloft, and the round-shot whizzed over his head, he appeared to be more gratified than at his own table when ordering another

bottle of wine. "Take it coolly, my lads," he said; "it will be our turn in a moment: bot broadsides at once—take good aim. I'll place you close enough.—Starboard, Mr. Stowage, a little; go right between the ship and the brig, but closest to the ship.—Stand by, my lads, on the main-deck; now then,—fire!" At the word, the roar of the two broadsides followed, the thick smoke enveloped the frigate, and cries from the brig gave ample notice of the destruction which had followed.

"Round to, Mr. Stowage;—sail-trimmers, to the larboard-braces. Take care, Mr. Stowage, not to shake her in the wind, but to keep good steerage-way: over to the starboard side, every man."

The *Arethusa* now ranged up alongside the brig. The ship-corvette filled instantly to support her companion; and the brig, not relishing so powerful an adversary, took advantage of the smoke and shot to pass the frigate. The corvette now came gallantly alongside, and commenced a very spirited attack; whilst the brigs took up raking positions, and poured in their unreturned fire.

It was past seven P.M. when the action

commenced on the part of the Arethusa ; and although she was close alongside of a vessel of far inferior force, yet so determined was the resistance and so well maintained was the contest, that it was nine o'clock before the corvette surrendered. This seemed a general signal for flight: the conquered vessel was taken possession of, and sails trimmed in pursuit ; and although the desperate resistance of the one vessel proved how gallantly the French were disposed to meet their enemies, yet Murray viewed the whole force through a diminishing medium—they were never in appearance too ample for his grasp, or too powerful to be subdued by his skill and intrepidity. In spite of all his endeavours, however, he was doomed to be again balked: the small vessels soon began to sweep out of gun-shot, and by ten o'clock every one of the vessels but the Bergère was under shelter of the forts, and escaped from all further attacks of the Arethusa.*

* The nautical reader will remark, that the action above recorded is taken from the gallant exploit of the *Sirius*, Captain William Prowse.

The very determined resistance of the *Bergère* reflected the highest honour on Commodore Ducllos, who commanded her ; and the other captains of the flotilla were solely indebted to the disabled state of their opponent, and the danger of approaching the shore, for their fortunate escape.

The prize was soon manned, and despatched that same evening to Malta. The killed were buried with all the honours of war, Captain Murray being well aware that seamen are particularly alive to any attention paid to their messmates under such circumstances : a volley or two of musketry, the band playing sacred music, and the service read in a properly impressive style, make upon the survivors a deep sensation of gratitude. In this action the *Arethusa* lost eight men killed and twenty wounded ; and she was further weakened by her spars being damaged, her hull struck, and twenty more men absent in the prize.

The next morning was devoted to shifting topmast, repairing sails, reefing new running-rigging, and making the frigate look as if she had not been in action.

Murray now felt the conscious glow of self-approbation as he penned his first despatch: the immense disparity of force was evident. After giving an account of the number of vessels and guns, he never for a second dwelt upon the superior force to which he was opposed; he spoke in high terms of admiration of the conduct of the French Commodore, and thus enhanced his own valour by affording deserved praise to his antagonist.

We have had two or three occurrences worthy of being remembered in the service, which have been thus described in the despatch:—"I have the honour to inform, &c. &c. that his Majesty's ship under my command captured, on the 20th of June, the enemy's ships named in the margin; and I have the honour to be, &c. &c." The enemy's ships "in the margin" amounted to four times the force of his Majesty's ships: and this was the whole account of the action. "Glory to God and the Empress, Ismael is ours!" is perhaps the shortest despatch on record: but Suwarrow never wrote much. The best answer to a desire to strike, is that of

Captain Jeremiah Coglin, who was told to do so by a very superior force. "Strike!" said he, "that I will, and d—d hard too!" and so he did too, and took the vessel opposed to him. "Give me a certificate," said a French captain to Captain Coglin, who had captured him without his making the least resistance—indeed, he never fired a gun,—“that I have acted *bravely*.” —“I can’t exactly do that,” replied the gallant Englishman; “but I’ll give you a certificate that you have acted *prudently*.”

The Arethusa had stood some distance from the land, and the second day after the action with the flotilla, the man at the mast-head reported a large ship; the signal midshipman reported her as a frigate, and Mr. Jones, who had perched himself on the top-gallant yard, reported her as a very suspicious sail. It was at daylight that she was first seen, the wind being north-east by east, the Arethusa standing on the starboard tack, the stranger bearing south-west. Captain Murray instantly bore up in chase.

As the weather was very hazy, some time elapsed before the stranger was properly made

out. She was evidently a frigate on the larboard tack, with her royals set ; but the difficulty of accurately discovering her course or her intentions arose from her having her mizen-top-sail aback and her maintop-sail shivering. The rake of her masts was decisive of her nation : there was not the least doubt that she was a frigate from Toulon, which had crept along the coast, and was now apparently disposed to court an action.

Captain Murray was resolved not to disappoint her captain ; and in his short energetic address to his men, he mentioned his regret at the loss he had experienced from the last action, and the absence of his men in the prize : “ Not,” said he, “ that the victory is in the least degree doubtful from their absence,—but that I regret such brave fellows should be excluded from sharing the honour with us. That, my lads,” said he, as he stood on the carronnade slide and pointed to the chase,—“ that is a French frigate : in three hours’ time she shall be an English frigate ! And now, my lads, we have no lee-shore to fear, and, thank God ! no one to assist us. This will be a fine trial of strength, and

our former *practice* will now become beneficial. I shall lay you close alongside ; and I have confidence enough in the Arethusa's crew, although diminished in numbers, to expect the certain capture of that ship. We will keep our three cheers until we are near enough for the crew to hear them ; and when the work is done, we will splice the main-brace."

Whilst this was occurring on board the Arethusa, the officers of the French frigate were passing their remarks and calculating their prize-money.

"She is nothing more than a corvette, and not a very large one either," said the French captain to his officers.

"She certainly does not look very large, although she is in the haze," replied the first lieutenant ; "and there can be little doubt of the result."

"These English sailors," continued the first, "consider themselves invincible, and that no vessel has a right to sail the seas but their own : we must look large to her from our position, and with our royal yards aloft we must

appear what we are. And yet the little vessel comes down as gallantly as if she were a three-decker. It is marvellous how some men walk to their certain destruction, and how coolly they tumble into a trap which with common prudence they might avoid !” He then addressed his men, who were at quarters, desiring them “to fire high, so as to hinder the escape of the rash captain who was coming down to sail with them into a French harbour.”

It was eight A.M. The French frigate had remained on the larboard tack, waiting for the *Arethusa*, and keeping still under the same sail. She hoisted her colours, and fired a gun to windward. As this was considered a fair challenge—a kind of throwing down the glove, Captain Murray ordered the colours to be hoisted and a blank cartridge to be fired. “Mr. Stowage,” he said, “after we have beaten that gentleman, he will try to escape ; we will engage him to leeward to prevent it. We may have his smoke in the first instance, but we shall prevent any bearing up and making sail.—Where is the gunner ?”

“He is busy on the main-deck,” replied Weazel, “priming the men, sir.”

“What do you mean, Mr. Weazel?” said the first lieutenant.

“I heard him say that all hands were loaded with sin, and that he would prime them for heaven.”

“This is no time for any nonsense, Mr. Weazel! Go down in the main-deck—ask him if everything is right in the magazine.”

Mr. Weazel was down in a moment. “Gunner,” said he, “the captain wants to know if your work is done in the magazine.”

“No, my work is not done in the magazine, Mr. Weazel; but I have told the sinners of their state, and have given them some of the magazine to read, and I have not been sparing of the tracts: many of them who are here now will be there to-morrow,” pointing to the sea, —“and to go with such a load of sin!”

“Hulloa!” said Weazel, “has any one given you an acting commission of parson, and told you to preach? Why, if you talk that way, you will make half the men afraid of their lives!

Hand here that rubbish!" said Weazel; and he began collecting the tracts, which the seamen had shoved into their waistbands, and said they would read when the business was over.

"Well, Mr. Weazel, what does the gunner say?"

"He says, sir, his work is not done; that all hands are fitted out for a hot cruize below; and that if we do not read these things,"—handing out the tracts,—“we shall go down stern foremost, and be stirred up with a long pole hereafter.”

"Poor fellow!" said Jones, "he is half mad, but very sincere. You had better bundle that rubbish overboard.—But stop; even my curiosity gets the better of me now: let us see what they are. ‘Wrappers of Wrath for the Cold in Christ’—‘A wet Blanket for the burning Soul’—‘A comfortable Draught for the thirsty Sinner’—‘Crumbs of Comfort for the craving Christian’—‘New Steps for the broken Ladder’—‘A tough Tow-rope for the trusty Tar.’ Why, here is enough to make a mutiny on board of the Channel fleet! and some of his own trash

amongst it: ‘A Monkey’s Tail to point the Gun of Salvation’—‘A blue Light for the sinful Sailor’—‘The real Rocket to lift the Righteous’—‘A Spark to fire the Devil’s Magazine.’ Bundle them overboard,” said Jones: “a regular attempt at mutiny, and enough to damp the ardour of any man! That psalm-singing boy does as much mischief as his master!”

Whilst this was going on abaft the mizen-mast, the captain had visited every part of the ship: he was loudly cheered as he passed round the decks. He saw the signal-books collected, the weights put in the box, and having satisfied himself as to all arrangements both below and aloft, he came on deck just as the gunner’s magazine, as Weazel called it, was drowned.

The French frigate at a quarter to nine opened her fire, directing all her guns aloft; then filled her main and mizen-top sails, gathered way, and wore, bringing a fresh broadside to bear upon the Arethusa. The wind being light, much time was required to near the Frenchman; and he, availing himself of his position, practised the above manœuvre three times,

thus keeping almost his own distance ; for when he got before the wind, he seemed much superior in sailing to the *Arethusa*. Murray's impatience soon became manifest ; the shot of the Frenchman rattled amongst his rigging, and finding that many men must be sacrificed before he could pass to leeward of his wary antagonist, he altered his determination and ran right at her to windward.

This gallant measure succeeded ; by a quarter after nine both frigates being then on the larboard tack within pistol-shot, brought their broadsides mutually to bear, and an animated fire commenced. The *Arethusa*, being under all sail, with the exception of her studding-sails, shot ahead of the French frigate : the latter, immediately profiting by her opponent's damaged state of rigging and of her own position, bore up, and thus getting her guns to bear on the stern of the *Arethusa*, raked her. She then instantly luffed up and tried to bestow her starboard broadside in the same manner. This last intention was frustrated by Murray, who instantly ordered the sail-trimmers to the braces,

threw the *Arethusa* right aback, brought the bow (or rather, stern) of the Frenchman against the starboard quarter of the *Arethusa*, and foul of each other they lay in a parallel direction.

“Boarders on the starboard quarter !” The word was repeated, and immediately the men, headed by their different officers, (the boarding-pikes and cutlasses gleaming in the sunshine,) rushed to the appointed place ; whilst on board the Frenchman the cry was also to board, and her fore-castle was crowded with a very superior force.

“Avaust boarding !” said Murray. “Mr. Weazel, jump down on the main-deck and tell the officer of the after-quarters to get one of the guns through the cabin-windows.—Fire away, marines,—that ’s your sort ; keep down all but the small-arm men !—Jones, jump below and get that gun ready !”

The Frenchmen, having tried three times to carry the *Arethusa* by boarding, and being beaten off each time, turned their attention to a long brass thirty-six pounder which was on their fore-castle, and brought it to bear upon the English

frigate ; whilst the soldiers on board the French ship annoyed Jones and his party by keeping up a steady and well-directed fire upon the cabin-windows, killing and wounding vast numbers. Foremost amongst the most active was Weazel ; he was now quite in his element—he cut his jokes as readily as if out of all danger : and the gunner, who was told of the position of the ships, finding the powder-boys did not come to replenish their boxes, was likewise conspicuous at the post of danger.

“ Hand here the tackle, Pounce !” said Weazel : “ there—bob your head like a mandarin in a tea-shop, or you ’ll go after your magazine with lead enough to sink a man of three times your specific *gravity*. That ’s your sort !” he continued as the gunner worked in silence. “ Now get a handspike — not that monkey’s tail of yours, and handspike the gun round,—never mind the captain’s lockers—down with the rudder-head—kick that rubbish overboard ; hand here a cartridge—a rammer, you precious-looking cuckoo ! I beg his pardon—he caught that shot right in his hand ! Now, then, my

lads ! you are half of you indebted to the gunner for your wounds ; for had he fitted a long tackle to the gun, instead of writing his ‘ Monkey’s Tail,’ we should have cleared away those precious Frenchmen half an hour ago : there they stand right along the larboard gangway blazing away at us as if we were sparrows on a dung-heap !”

Murray, finding the whole fire of the French marines directed towards his cabin-windows, and hearing that the deck was literally strewn with the killed and wounded, went down himself, sent Mr. Jones on deck, and there saw Weazel foremost in all the danger, appearing to bear a charmed life.

“ Well done, Weazel !” he exclaimed ; “ your promotion is sure.”

“ Thank you, sir,” he replied ; “ the gunner thinks I shall never be exalted. Now, then, we are ready ; hand here another canister, and just another bundle of grape : there’s fruit enough for half Paris !”

The gunner, who had never said a word, but worked in the most exposed part, took as quiet

aim as if he were practising at a cask, and fired right along the French frigate's deck. It stopped all the musketry—no less than twenty of the enemy were killed by the single discharge, and the ship appeared swept from stem to stern, since not a man was visible for a minute after that awful fire.

“There's D. D. for a lot of them,” said Weazel. “Pounce, you have all this on your conscience; you have set those fellows dancing to a tune they don't like. Knock that powder-monkey's eye out! why don't you move?—hand here again.” Again the gun was fired, sweeping fore and aft the Frenchman's deck, and creating a fear which even the gallant Frenchmen could not overcome.

In the mean time, the Arethusa's marines were not idle: their fire was so well directed that the French frigate was unable to use the forecastle gun, and both parties, from their vicinity to each other, were obliged to stoop under the bulwarks to load.

Half an hour had the two ships been in the position we have assigned them, when a

light breeze caught the sails of the French frigate (her yards being braced up, whilst the *Arethusa's* were aback), and she forged a little ahead. As she advanced on the broadside of her antagonist, the jolly tars poured in the contents of their guns, cutting away the head-rails and gammoning, and seriously wounding the bowsprit. The Frenchmen were now all in their glory; again they gave a cheer as their frigate shot up upon the broadside of the *Arethusa*, and a most destructive action commenced, yard-arm to yard-arm,—the one party fully convinced of superiority of men, the other firm in the belief that they could beat three French frigates.

Weazel was heard singing the song,

“ And when the foe shall meet our fire,
Rather than strike, we'll all expire,
On board of the *Arethusa*.”

“ Blaze away, my lads! never mind expending the powder; plenty more where that came from. If I can only catch hold of any mate of that ship, I'll see if his fingers will grow on my hand again!”

Murray's voice was likewise heard cheering his men, and the advantage of practical gunnery now came into play. Almost every evening the Arethusa's men had practised at their guns; and from being quite at home at their business, with the advantage of the real practice the two days before, they now fired nearly two shots to the French frigate's one. The battle soon exhibited sufficient proof of the good firing of the Arethusa, when, with her maintop-mast gone, her foremast tottering from its wounded state, the French frigate relinquished all hope of capturing her opponent, and passed ahead of the Arethusa and was soon out of gunshot.

On board the English frigate every brace and bowline had been shot away; her sails were cut to pieces, her main-royal mast, maintop-sail yard and gaff were in shatters; and although, comparatively speaking, uninjured in the hull, she lay on the waters perfectly unmanageable. The gaff had been shot away when the two ships first fell foul of each other, and the flag of the English ensign falling on the forecastle of the Frenchman, they instantly

seized it, tore it from the gaff-end, and carried it aft as a trophy. Murray looked at Weazel, who directly got a boat's ensign, stuck on a boathook, and called out, "That's all the prize-money you'll make out of us to-day, my lads!"

"Now, then, Mr. Jones," said Murray, "turn the hands up, refit ship,—I have not half done with my friend yet, and he looks as much like a wounded bird as ourselves,—let a party of men get a new suit of sails up: hand up some coils of small rope—anything will do to reeve for the present: look sharp, my lads! Topmen aloft! unbend sails!—let the gunner look to the main rigging, and a small party of the marines go down below to remove any of the wounded men, and carry the dead forward out of sight—cover them over: see to this, sir," he said to the second lieutenant of marines. "Knot all you can aloft, Jones; reeve and cut the rest:—don't wait for orders aloft!—unbend as quick as possible! Well done in the foretop!—There, my lads, look ahead of you!—there's her foremast gone;—we'll have her before one o'clock.—Step out

with the foretop-sail halyards. Well done, my lads,—trim sails!—Jones, here's a delightful breeze coming; the Frenchman's a perfect wreck, and long before they get clear of their foremast we shall be alongside.—That Weazel is a wonderful fellow,—where is he?"

"He is down in the cockpit, sir," replied one of the youngsters, "very badly wounded."

"Go down and ask the surgeon about it, youngster. Weazel and the gunner," he continued to Jones, "although as opposed to each other as oil and water, are two of the finest fellows I ever saw."

"He is very badly wounded indeed, sir," said the midshipman, coming on deck; "but he says he shall die contented if he only hears the cheers of the men when the French frigate strikes."

"He shall not be long in being so gratified," murmured Murray; "although if it is to be the last sound he hears, I declare I wish that ship to escape.—To quarters again; we have her now, Jones!—Mr. Stowage, place us as

close alongside of her as you can without getting foul of her. Stand by, my lads. Now, then, one and all, with a good will, give her three cheers !”

In an instant the lower rigging was crowded, and three such hearty cheers were given, that Weazel started from the chest on which he was laid in the steerage, joined in the cheer, and singing out,

“ Rather than strike, we’ll all expire,
On board of the Arethusa,”

fell back and fainted.

The effect of these cheers upon the Frenchmen may be imagined: their ship, which they had fought and defended with determined bravery, lay a wreck upon the waters. The Arethusa was coming up on the starboard side, over which was the wreck of the foremast: the men, from the gallant manner she approached, became dispirited; and after a short council of war, in which it was resolved that all further opposition would be useless, the tricoloured flag of France was ordered to be

struck ; and at fifteen minutes after noon the Arethusa's men gave the cheer of victory : and poor Weazel, unable to speak from weakness, moved his fore-finger round his head, imitating the manner in which a sailor waves his hat when he cheers, and died.

The Arethusa ranged up alongside, hove-to, and received on board the brave Frenchman who had so gallantly defended and so excellently manœuvred his ship. As one brave man receives another less fortunate than himself, so did Captain Murray his former antagonist : he took the sword which was offered to him, and returned it with courtesy and elegance ;—“ He,” said Murray, “ who has so gallantly wielded the weapon in his country's cause is the best man to retain it :” with this he offered it to his conquered foe, and taking him by the arm, led him to his cabin. The bulkheads had been run up the instant the French frigate struck, and the brave but unfortunate Frenchman found himself, by the generous foresight of Murray, effectually screened from the public view, which

of all things is the most humiliating when a man is first led into captivity.*

Leaving the captain below, Murray was again at his post. He gave positive orders that the prisoners were to be treated with every respect, and their wounded with every care. He declared that any violation of his orders would be visited with a severity of punishment which should be long remembered :—no cruelties, no plunder ; the enemy who has struck should be your friend, and he who has nobly defended his ship should never be insulted.

“ Mr. Jones,” said he, “ change the prisoners, and let them be searched. We must be prudent ; for, owing to our loss and their superiority of numbers, it is not impossible that they will attempt to recapture the ship. But, by Heavens ! if they do, I will be just as severe for the breach of honour as I would against my own crew for a breach of trust !” Murray’s face became pale

* This action, which we have here given faithfully, is a just tribute to Captain, now Sir Thomas Baker, who, in the *Phoenix*, captured the *Didon*, in the manner thus described, and whose force was exactly that which is stated above.

as he repeated the last words; and with an impatient motion he thrust his hand into his bosom, as if feeling for some object, which, having found, his tranquil manner returned.

Mr. Jones was now actively employed: he was to take charge of the frigate, and he had to select his crew. It was impossible to work the prize with less than sixty men, and these were sent from the *Arethusa*; twenty prisoners were retained on board the *Didon*. This left the *Arethusa* thinly manned indeed, especially for the charge of the men she had now on board. The comparative force was as follows:

		<i>Arethusa</i> .	<i>Didon</i> .
Broadside Guns,	{ No.	21	23
	{ lbs.	444	563
Crew,	No.	245	330
Size,	Tons	884	1091

The superiority was altogether in favour of the French: her crew consisted of young, strong, active seamen, trained by as gallant an officer as ever walked the deck of the French navy. No man has since stood higher in public estimation than Captain Milius; and no

man more richly deserved the praise which he has received.

By the affair with the flotilla, the *Arethusa* was twenty-eight men short of complement. She had now lost ten men killed, and twenty-eight wounded, besides the sixty sent in the prize; she therefore had only on board in an efficient state one hundred and nineteen men to take charge of three hundred and fifty in sound health, besides forty-four who were wounded. Murray felt unusually anxious: in the first instance, he had to lend Jones a hand in refitting the prize; and he scarcely liked to confine his prisoners below, for that looked like cruelty.

Whilst pondering over his future conduct, he received a message from the prize, saying that it was requisite to cut the mainmast away, as it was so badly wounded that it could not be secured. This settled his resolution: the prisoners were placed on each side in the cable-tiers; the carpenters nailed some rough wood from the orlop to the lower deck, which made the exit difficult; whilst some of the sea-

men lashed capstan-bars between the tiers and the after-hold. Sentries were placed at each part ; and thus security being, as was imagined, effected, the mainmast of the *Didon* was cut away, jury-masts were rigged, and the *Arethusa*, with her prize in tow, made sail towards Malta.

There appeared a perfect resignation to their fate amongst the officers of the captured ship. They fenced in the gun-room, played piquet with their messmates, and, with all the liveliness characteristic of their nation, sought to amuse their less volatile companions. No thought of the future seemed to agitate them ; every misfortune which might occur was put down to “ *fortune de guerre* ;” and, like good predestinarians, they seemed to take the rough and the smooth without care or regret.

Not exactly so the prisoners in the hold or tiers. They had no space to dance quadrilles—no light by which they could play cards ; the only gleam of a candle which they could get was from the sentry’s lantern, the man and the light being placed on the hatches of the hold,

and separated from his charge by the cage-like prison alone which had been so hastily erected. A Jacob's ladder was fixed on the combing of the hatchway on the main-deck, and only twenty-five men were allowed on deck at a time.

At first some few sung songs, and appeared disposed to make the best of their condition. This soon gave way to low murmurs, then to hasty words ; whilst the men began to congregate together, to whisper rapidly, and, by their uneasy conduct, to manifest a disposition to act on some concerted plan.

This was duly reported by the sentry ; and the French pilot of the *Arethusa*, dressed as a marine, was sent down to relieve the guard. Believing him to be an Englishman, and unable to comprehend their language—for they first tried him—they continued hatching their mischief. He overheard their plot ; which was, to rise, capture the *Arethusa*, and recapture the *Didon*. The whole affair was to take place on the first occasion of allowing twenty-five men to walk on deck to get a little air and exercise.

The last man was to seize the sentry ; a rush was to be made, and the barricade to be broken down. The twenty-five men were to make a stand, until others jumped up the ladders ; and thus they hoped to gain possession of the quarter-deck, where there was a stand of cutlasses, and by cutting a few throats to effect their object.

The pilot was eager immediately to bellow out the intelligence, and nearly betrayed his apprehensions by his constantly looking up the hatchway. At last he was relieved, and rushed on the quarter-deck.

Murray heard his intelligence, and reported it to Captain Milius, who was disposed to recommend a little punishment at once. But Murray waited quietly : he placed the pilot on the main-deck, desiring him to seize the ringleader when he came up. This was done ; and Captain Milius's coxswain was the man.

The French captain was sent for ; and the culprit stood before him. " Have you any complaint to make of unkindness, of severity, or of want of food ?" asked Milius.

" None," replied the man.

“ I knew it,” replied his former captain. “ Had you cause of complaint, I would have joined your enterprise. As it is, you are a dishonourable scoundrel, and unworthy of the name of Frenchman !”

He was placed in irons ; and in a few days the Arethusa entered Valetta harbour with her prize in tow, and was safely anchored.

CHAPTER V.

The Trader and the French Privateer.

WE leave the *Arethusa* at Malta to refit, and Murray to rejoice over the honour due to him, and the prize-money in perspective. Jones was made a commander, and some few promotions occurred.

We must now follow Corncob.

His voyage in the packet was prosperous, and in twelve days from the date of his sailing he found himself at Falmouth. There he found a vessel going round to Portsmouth; his money had run pretty short, and he found out that his liberality had left him with just sufficient to meet the demand of the skipper of a coaster, but not to satisfy the book-keeper at the coach-

office. He had no choice left, although, having stepped on shore, he had vehemently sworn never to trust himself again on board of any vessel but the Matchless. He was soon, however, shipped on board the Mary Henderson; and the wind being fair, about four in the afternoon they weighed their anchors and put to sea.

The captain of the craft was a rough, hard-featured, short, stout sailor—all open and above-board; a man who never said a civil thing by accident, and never was known by any chance to coincide in opinion with those who exchanged a word with him. Corncob, who really loved his daughter with much affection, was now in exquisite spirits at the thought of again seeing her. The mate of the vessel had pronounced the wind as sure to last, and calculated that by sunset on the morrow the Mary Henderson would be safe enough at Portsmouth. The craft was under weigh, the sails set and trimmed, when Corncob, unable to restrain his feelings, said to the captain,

“ Well, I calculate now all my care’s at an

end, and to-morrow I shall see my daughter at Portsmouth."

"Then, old boy," said the captain, "you calculate wrong: you won't be at Portsmouth this week to come; and as for your cares, you'll have a cargo of them before you land."

"I expect, captain, you're one of Job's comforters," replied the American. "Why, your mate there, who seems to know as much of the clouds as if he made them, guesses this wind will last."

"I guess he's wrong now, for he never was right, and that we shall have the wind foul before long."

"Well," said the Yankee, "I expect one of these days I shall get to my journey's end."

"Just the contrary," said the captain; "for you'll never be there till you die—and then you have got a journey of eternity before you, so you'll never get to the end."

"Well, I expect you are a particular pleasant fellow," said Corncob, "and must know the gunner of the Arethusa."

"Wrong again—never heard of him."

“I think,” said the mate, “we had better get a pull of the weather-braces, for the wind’s coming further aft.”

“Just the contrary,” said the captain: “the wind’s coming forward, and the yards are too fine.”

“I calculate, mate,” said Corncob, “that your captain, there, is like a Maryland pig: if you want him to go one way, you must pull him the other.”

“He won’t agree to that, I’ll be bound,” replied the mate; “for ever since I’ve sailed with him he has never once agreed with me on any question. He fell overboard one day, and I got in the boat and picked him up; and when I thought I would say something to comfort him, by remarking that boats were blessed inventions, or else he must have been drowned,—‘Just the contrary,’ said he; ‘for if it had not been for a boat, I never should have been on board the craft, and therefore never could have tumbled overboard.’”

“Well, then,” said Jonathan, “I know my man, and I expect I’ll get him to agree with me.”

“Not you !” replied the mate. “I tell you, if you swore you saw a ghost as white as snow, he’d swear he saw it also, but that it was as black as the devil.”

In the evening, the captain and Corncob were down in the cabin. The wary old American descanted upon the danger of smoking below : “Just the contrary,” came out—and with it Jonathan’s pipe. Rum was “tarnation rubbish ;” —the captain had nothing else, swearing it was the best liquor of life : and Corncob, now finding himself quite at his ease, puffed away heartily and swallowed large potations, merely as he said, to try and become a convert to the captain’s opinion.

“There ’s a vessel standing after us, sir,” said the mate ; “she’s right astern and under a crowd of sail : she looks very like a privateer.”

“Privateer !” said the captain ; “why, it ’s a light collier bound to the northward.”

“I think,” said the mate, “we had better edge towards the shore, sir, and clap on a little more sail.”

“Just the contrary,” said the captain: “I shall shorten sail and let him come up, and then we can keep company together.”

“I guess you will keep company with him longer than you like, captain,” said Corncob.

“I calculate I shan’t, Mr. Yankee,” replied the bear; “for when I am tired of his company, I shall leave him to himself.”

It was a moonlight night, the weather beautifully fine, and the four or five men who composed the crew of the *Mary Henderson* had not gone to bed. The mate asked them all their opinions, and every one seemed inclined to fear she might be a French privateer, which had stood across the Channel to pick up any vessel disposed to make a run of it, or which might have been separated from a homeward-bound convoy, and sneaked up along-shore to avoid such intruders upon commerce as those vessels were known to be. She came up fast, and the mate was about to make some remark, when Jonathan took him aside and said, “Now, mate, you may be a very good sailor, and know a horse-marine from a stuffed alligator; but I

guess you don't know how to manage that man : what do you want done ?”

“ Why, to edge in-shore, to be sure, and see if that vessel is chasing us or not. If she is, she will alter her course after us ; if not, why all the better—she will go her course, and we ours.”

“ I calculate,” said Corncob to the captain, “ that the vessel astern would just sail round your clumper, for she ’s got a lighter breeze, but she ’s coming up fast.”

“ Just the contrary,” replied the captain ; “ for she ’s got a much stronger breeze, and does not gain an inch upon us.”

“ You ’ll get a stronger breeze if you stand further out to sea : the wind is always scant along-shore.”

“ Keep her three or four points *in* shore,” said the captain to the man at the helm : “ it ’s blowing half a hurricane there, and we shall go along the quicker.”

No sooner was this done, than the vessel astern seemed to alter her appearance. She was a lugger, with her sails on each side, going before the wind, and, with the main-

top-sail set, seemed before a small sneaking brig: now she altered her course, trimmed her sails on the larboard tack, and steered three points higher than the *Mary Henderson*, in order to cut her off.

“I think there’s no doubt now what she is,” said the mate. “If that’s not a French privateer, and we are not prisoners before midnight, there’s no canvass in a foretop-sail!”

“She is a Cawsand Bay fishing-boat,” said the obstinate captain; “and before midnight we might have a dish of fish for supper.”

“It will be a dish of French souls, then,” said the mate.

“—Mixed up, I calculate,” said Corneob, “with some fish-sauce from Dieppe.”

The skipper soon became a little anxious: his obstinacy, however, did not give way as the privateer came up. A shot whizzed over his head.

“We had better,” said the mate, “heave to at once: we can never escape, and we shall only get the men killed.”

“Just the contrary,” said the captain: “we will carry more sail, edge in-shore, and, if we

can, run the craft high and dry. He won't like getting too close to Plymouth; for he might find a man-of-war outside of him to-morrow, and the more he fires the greater risk will he himself run."

"Then he'll run alongside of us and board us," said the mate.

"Just the contrary," answered the captain; "for he'll try and sink us."

"Well," said Corncob, giving a sigh, "settle it amongst yourselves: I guess he dare not touch a hair on my head, or he'll have Congress at him in a moment;—he'll know me for an American."

"He'll know you for no such thing; and being an old man, he will make you sweep his decks until he gets into harbour; and then you will grin through the bars as well as the rest of us."

The old obstinate pig, as Corncob called the captain, was, with all his faults, a brave seaman. He saw the danger, and he made the best use of the *Mary Henderson's* sails to avoid a prison; he made a good calculation also as to the

probable behaviour of the privateer;—firing guns would only alarm the coast, and getting too close in-shore might get the vessel becalmed;—and although he contradicted everything which was said, he still did everything a seaman could do to save his vessel. He had neared the land considerably; indeed, so much so, that a long point was now seen on the star-board bow: the privateer was at least a mile and a half distant, and appeared a little baffled by the wind. The breeze had died away considerably with the *Mary Henderson*; but for some few minutes she seemed to hold her own.

Corncob, whose eyes had not deceived him during the chase in the Bay of Biscay, was the first who called out that the privateer was no longer coming up. He was met, of course, by a “‘Just the contrary:’ she’s running up hand over fist, and will be alongside before any man has time to say his prayers. But I’ll give him a run for it—and right on shore too; so, mate, get the boat clear for hoisting out,—we might get a shot through the one astern.”

Corncob now began to lose his usual good

spirits, and complained most vehemently of all the tricks Fortune had played him. He recalled his former days, and then thought how happy he might have been if he had left the cargo of notions to be brought over by any other man but himself, and if he had kept his daughter at home to be married to an American instead of hunting up a lost midshipman. He was a little startled by the whiz of a shot, which came just clear of the taffrail and went through the fore and main courses.

“That hit us,” said the Yankee.

“Just the contrary,” said the captain: “it went through the sails. He may fire as long as he likes; but he shall have some trouble to get the craft off the rocks.”

A light now appeared, which soon grew into a large fire, blazing beautifully in the clear night. Another was seen in another direction. The privateer almost immediately bore round up, and stood out to sea; whilst the *Mary Henderson* hove-to close in-shore, against which the ripple of the water as it broke on the beach was plainly discernible. There she

remained until the privateer was out of sight, when she again made sail, and taking a fresh fair breeze, anchored in safety at the Mother-bank.

Corncob was soon on shore. Having shaken hands with the captain, and in the fulness of his heart thanked him for his kindness, "Just the contrary," he heard as he stepped over the side: "you paid me—I fed you—no obligation—all's square fore and aft—good-b'ye."

To Jonathan's uncommon delight, he found that his *notions* had been well sold; that his daughter was snugly housed, his agent an honest man, and Sir Hector likely to have been as a father to his child. Having received some money, he immediately began to steer a course towards his daughter's abode, and, like a true philosopher, turned all his wanderings to a salutary effect. "It will teach me to be contented at home," said he to himself; "and I guess he's a considerable donkey who has got enough to be happy upon, to risk it in making more! If ever they catch me afloat again, except to go

from James's River to Norfolk on market-days, may I be most particularly thrashed by my own niggers !”

At Sir Hector's house everything had gone on quietly and comfortably. Murray's letter had given new life and hope to Amelia : she would not consider her brother dead whilst a chance remained of his being alive,—neither would she despond. Maria Corneob still clung to her first love : in Hammerton she had fixed her hopes of happiness, and now that she had cemented a strong friendship with his sister, she felt very disinclined to think even of St. James's River : home had no charms for her whilst Hammerton was away. For her father she felt no uneasiness : Walter's letter had pronounced him well and on his way to England, and she confidently looked forward to his safe arrival. She regarded Sir Hector as her father ; and Amelia, as her sister, companion, and friend.

After dinner one evening, as Sir Hector and what might be termed his family were sitting in the drawing-room, a very unusual noise was heard outside : the whole household seemed re-

solved to resist the entrance of some determined man who blustered and created no common disturbance. Sir Hector, old as he was, manifested a little activity, and believing his castle likely to be taken by storm, was in the first instance for sending the women to fortify their chambers, whilst he proceeded to head his servants. He opened the door, and the sound of her father's voice broke upon Maria's ear.

“I hope to be eternally eaten by cockroaches, if I don't mash your skulls as I would a cocoa-nut!” said Corneob; and suiting the action to the word, he dabbed his broad hand upon the cauliflower head of one of the footmen, dispersing a most ominous cloud of white dust, which the ingenuity of the then chancellor of the exchequer had taxed as hair-powder. “I calculate you're a precious set of powder-monkeys!” continued Jonathan.—“Whew! whew!—here's a precious fog come out of the lazy vermint's head! But now's my time: here's board him, I calculate, in the smoke.” And in the manner he had seen negroes fight in America, making his own head a battering-

ram, he ran right on, and capsized him clean over old Benjamin, who was coming to his rescue with the kitchen-poker, rather too hot to be handled, and jumping over his prostrate antagonist, stood in the hall panting for breath.

The maids, ever ready to satisfy their curiosity, each ran to the spot, shrieked, and retreated; and whilst poor Jonathan stood flourishing his arms for another attack, John the footman had recovered his legs and armed himself with the hot poker. At this instant Corncob found his neck encircled by the arms of his daughter, and, making a stern board, came in no very fashionable manner into the presence of Sir Hector.

The Yankee's wrath was disarmed in a moment. The kind baronet welcomed him as an old friend; his daughter nearly smothered him with kisses; and Amelia, who saw before her the generous man who had sheltered her brother in his distress, seized the unemployed hand and said, "At least, Mr. Corncob, you must yield to the ladies!"

The surprise of Jonathan made ample amends

for the fear he had caused. In the whole of his life he had never stood in such a mansion ; and when he saw his daughter's improved appearance, the elegance of her dress, and her altered manner, he gave vent to his feelings in his real vernacular, and exclaimed, "I guess I'm fixed clean slick in a conjuring-box !"

His daughter soon introduced him properly to the baronet ; but before any interchange of civilities occurred, Corncob broke adrift by saying, "Avaust heaving, old gentleman, as they say on board the Arethusa : short accounts, long friends. I expect I owe you thirty pounds your son gave me instead of a flogging ; and here it is, which at the rate of five per cent. for seventeen days will be one shilling and three farthings interest : and there it is, I calculate, principal, interest and all, and when you give me a receipt, then, you know, we start all fair, excepting that I guess you have me on the debtor side of your ledger on the score of gratitude. But, Corncob, why, rot it ! I need not make a boy of myself either ; but a man may feel as a man, I calculate."

“Don’t think of it, my dear sir,” said Sir Hector; “your daughter has returned all obligations by giving us the pleasure of her company. We will not talk of such things; supper is ready, and you must give us an account of your adventures.”

So passed the evening; Corncob convulsing Sir Hector with laughter as he told him his adventure as a captain of horse-marines, his impressment, and all the tricks of that devil Weazel, whom, nevertheless, he said he loved for his fun and his good-humour. These anecdotes brought to mind all his mischief-making propensities after the wreck of the Tribune; and Sir Hector, taking a pocket-book from its usual place of abode, wrote down in it Weazel’s name: at that time he little knew how useless were all endeavours to serve him!

“And now,” said Corncob to his daughter, “you must be ready to start to-morrow and return to James’s River. The Matchless will be all in trim order for sailing, and when I have cleared the account with the agent, away we go home; and I guess it will be many a

year before I sail again on the salt seas, without I can walk along the sea-serpent, which reaches, I calculate, from Sandy Hook to the Bill of Portland."

Maria looked at Amelia: in that look, she conveyed her wish to die in England, rather than relinquish the chance of seeing Hammer-ton again.

"You cannot go to-morrow," said Sir Hector; "I have something to say to you on that head: besides, the Matchless can get ready just as well without you as with you."

"I expect you're wrong there: I know something about a vessel now—a man-of-war's the school for improvement."

"I know that," replied Sir Hector; "it is the best school to refrain the vicious, to instil honourable notions, to correct the covetous, in the whole world; and if I liked the profession before, I could almost use a woman's word, and say I love it now."

"Well, sir," said Corncob, "to-morrow we will talk over all that; but I calculate now I had better get back to Taunton, for I over-

sailed my harbour before I made the land hereabouts."

"Taunton !" said his daughter.

"A fiddlestick's end !" said Sir Hector ; "you are in a comfortable harbour here, and here you shall remain : you are under my command now, and you must follow the commodore."

Supper was brought in ; and Corncob, willing to show his liberty and equality principles, and likewise that he possessed a forgiving heart, shook hands with the powder-monkey of a servant, and said, "I calculate your head will ache for a month ; so, as peace is proclaimed, here's give your hand and welcome ; and let's have a glass of wine on the signing of the treaty, as Washington used to say."

Corncob spent one evening of his life at least free from care. His cargo of *notions* with which his schooner had been laden was sold ; every article of any value belonging to him had been preserved ; and he found himself none the poorer, but much the wiser, for his forced cruise in the Arethusa. He had learnt, though late

in life, a valuable lesson : he was convinced that, in all places, and under all circumstances, liberty and equality were not maintainable ; and he had perceived that order and regularity were necessary to preserve discipline ;—he was now aware that a captain must be an absolute monarch, and that anything in the smallest degree tending to weaken his power, was certain to create distrust, disobedience, and neglect.

“ I expect,” said he to Sir Hector, “ that your son will turn out a tarnation fine officer : he is none of your tippy-bobby, Jemmy Jessamy, pretty considerably d—me kind of cocked-hatted coxcombs ; but he is a sailor, and I calculate a seaman ; foremost in danger, and prudent enough to avoid it when the risk is more than the venture is worth.”

He then described the gale in the Bay of Biscay. Sir Hector’s eye glistened with delight at the recital ; and Amelia could not withdraw her look from the speaker while thus lavish in praise of him whom she loved. However, she was not quite so well pleased when Corncob wound up his remarks by saying that

he would have made an excellent merchant, for he took care to draw bills upon others, while he kept his own money snug enough.

After two days Corncob with his daughter took leave of the hospitable old baronet and of his adopted daughter ; the latter having promised Maria not to omit writing upon all opportunities. The parties separated, and Corncob and Maria arrived in safety in the Chesapeake.

CHAPTER VI.

Meeting of the Two Captives.

IN the mean time poor Hammerton had remained in captivity. His mind, naturally buoyant, never sank under his accumulation of grievances: the wholesome punishment inflicted on the obstinate mate was not lost upon him. He saw the necessity of exertion, and, with a willingness and cheerfulness which pleased the old Turk who was placed over him, he toiled through the drudgery to which, as far as appeared, he was condemned until the day of his death.

Too active, however, to lose all hope, his mind dwelt on the future prospect of escape: with this view he turned his attention to learn the language of the people by whom he was held in captivity. Naturally quick, he caught

their customs; and when dressed in a turban, and robed according to the costume of the natives, he might have been mistaken for a disciple of Mahomet. On religious points he had many arguments with his friend Mustapha; the latter imploring him to turn Turk, giving his description of the change as more the work of a minute without pain than as any operation of the mind. These persuasions, however, did not convince Hammerton, who preferred receiving the occasional buffets due to "a dog of a Christian," to forsaking his early faith. He smoked his pipe, allowed his beard and mustachios to grow, and by endeavouring to imitate the people by whom he was surrounded, he was soon convinced that if a chance occurred his escape was not wholly impossible.

Another strong inducement kept his curiosity alive. Mustapha had forbidden him ever to approach the western side of the house. The small windows overlooked a garden which was surrounded by a high wall; and although Hammerton had heard the shrill voices of

females, yet he never had seen one. Sailors are always very curious, and the more danger there is in an enterprise, the more they admire it : Hammerton, having a full share of that commodity, resolved to avail himself of the first opportunity of doing what was so strictly forbidden.

Six months had passed, and the watchful eye was relaxed. Hammerton was declared the best of all Christian dogs, and bore kicks and cuffs, insults and buffets, with the most spaniel-like subserviency. He was now left more to himself.

Turks have holidays as well as Christians : further eastward, warlike amusements constitute their principal recreation, — further south, indolence and inactivity are termed amusements ; in fact, perfect freedom from all thought, cessation from all labour, the liberty of sitting in the sun to smoke, to relate anecdotes which never occurred, and to tell lies on the most extensive scale, may be estimated as the chief amusements to which a lazy Turk can be invited. One of their religious festivals occasioned a holiday, and Hammerton was left at home

to guard the outside part of the premises, which would have been as efficiently done by the score of dogs which growled and yelped whenever a stranger appeared.

“ ‘Faith,’” thought Hammerton to himself, “ this chance is not to be thrown away ! As to making my escape, that is out of the question ; I am not quite Turk enough yet, and I should soon be detected in my garb, or my tongue would betray me : besides, I have no idea except by the sun which way to steer towards the coast, where Christians resort : but I may as well take a peep at the forbidden fruit which the old boy locks up in his garden and his harem.”

Having carefully surveyed the premises, and finding the coast perfectly clear, he got a ladder, and placing it against the westernmost part of the wall, he cautiously ascended. When he reached the point where his next step would have raised his head above the wall, he took a good survey around him : no human being was in sight. Not far from him were some sheep quietly nibbling the short

grass ; and now and then the sharp bark of the dog disturbed the dead calm of the day. Hamerton listened and heard steps approaching inside the garden wall. His heart beat high : he knew the rash act he was about to commit, yet he could not withdraw ; but he still kept concealed. Not many minutes elapsed before an air familiar to most English ears was hummed by a delicate voice ; yet no words were uttered. No other person joined in the song, or sung in answer.

“ Sure I remember that voice !” said Hamerton to himself ; “ it is that of the poor girl whose shriek I heard when I was placed in the dark cell. How shall I ensure her notice without betraying myself ? I ’ll try, however.”

He immediately turned his head away from the wall, so as not to appear too close, and whistled the air she had sung. Turks never whistle. Hamerton when he had concluded the first part stopped and listened. His ear caught the word, “ Hist — hist,” whispered above the silence around. He answered it in English, by “ Here — here ;” when he heard the foot-fall rapidly

retreating, and shortly afterwards another voice was heard.

“ Too late, by all that is good !” said Hamerton to himself ; “ but the day is young yet, and I can wait. I ’ll have a peep, however ;” and with cautious prudence he raised his head to the level of the wall, and taking a rapid survey, saw two women walking towards the house. Having tried the first attempt without discovery, he became bolder. He now perceived one or two more lingering in the garden, and becoming sensible of his imprudence, he removed the ladder, walked back, and placed himself under the wall.

His ear was stretched for the slightest sound ; for, in the calmness and silence of that sultry day, the very melody of the birds came in an enfeebled tone, as if worn out by the lassitude of the heart.

At last footsteps were heard, then voices—one, two, and three, and one which plainly bespoke authority was of deeper tone and more commanding than the rest. From the silence which ensued, it was evident that the party

were either standing still or had seated themselves on the grass. Presently the twang of a guitar reached his ear, and after some time a young rich voice, clear as the thrush's note, broke forth in a song. It was in English, the pronunciation clear and distinct, and given out with a fulness of tone which might lead her companions to imagine it a song of joy, except that the air was melancholy. It was intended to reach the ear of Hammerton, should he still be at hand.

Deeply did its words sink into the heart of Hammerton : all that was loyal, Christian-like, and brave, rose within him ; he hardly noticed the words of one of the other captive girls, as she lazily remarked that the air was melancholy and the song unintelligible.

“ All but the last verse,” said another, “ and then the Isauri heretic was animated : what was it all about ? ”

Hammerton resolved at all risks to let her know that her song was heard, and that her words fell not on inattentive ears ; in fact, that he would aid her to escape if possible. Reflect-

ing for a few moments how he could apprise her that a friend was at hand, he recollected that he still had about his person the envelope of a letter addressed to himself; wrapping this round a pebble, in order to give it the necessary weight, he threw it over the wall in the direction of the girls, and from the loud shriek which followed, it was evident it had been seen and taken as the signal for a general retreat.

It was now useless to peep into the garden: the old lady who commanded in that Ottoman paradise had taken the captives to their apartments, and no doubt a more rigorous surveillance would be practised. Hammerton, however, resolved to visit the ground whenever he could, trusting to the ingenuity of the girl to manage some mode of communication.

The Turkish festival was over—the rigid disciples of Mahomet had taken their last bath and performed their last ablutions—the sun had gone down, the evening prayer had been muttered, and all remained quiet. The old Turk had returned home; and as Hammerton was neither bastinadoed nor confined, he concluded his arti-

fice had not produced any complaint. His mind naturally pondering on the occurrences of the day, he watched with painful anxiety until Mustapha and the rest of his half-confused companions should fall asleep, being resolved to visit the spot and make himself perfectly master of the ground. The opium which these fellows had smoked, a thousand times more efficacious than brandy, soon did its duty, or at least seemed so to do; the snore of Mustapha was decisive as to the repose he enjoyed, and the rest of the slaves apparently followed his example.

When Hammerton had satisfied himself that all were fast asleep, he stole gently away, took the ladder, and placed it against the wall; he then carefully examined the ground, to see if any paper or Oriental signal had been deposited. None could he find; and therefore, with the elastic step of one resolved to face a danger, he surmounted the wall; then lifting the ladder and lowering it into the forbidden garden, he cautiously descended and stood on the dangerous ground.

The moon shone clearly, and gave him sufficient light to see the garden. In the centre was a small fountain which bubbled into a marble basin: the continued stream, by the noise it made, was a kind of safeguard to Hammerton—his step could not be heard. There was a grass-plat near the basin; and here and there, small raised heaps of mould, which were used as seats. It was on one of these spots, no doubt, that the English captive had sung her song of woe: there seemed but few flowers, and these sprinkled about without much attention to art.

The back part of the house had two wings, which projected into the garden, and nearly reached the fountain: in one of these, no doubt, the girl for whom he was thus risking his life was quietly asleep. Wound up to a pitch of desperation, Hammerton, unarmed as he was, resolved upon making an attempt to gain an interview, or, if possible, to let the Christian girl know that her song had not been sung in vain. Slowly and cautiously he approached the building. There seemed no windows, but, instead, something like loop-

holes; and the whole front, although it opened on a gallery, bore no signs of any egress excepting by the doors. To scale this would not have required any particular activity, but the folly of doing so was obvious.

He listened attentively; but not the slightest noise of any kind disturbed the night, except the fountain, which bubbled on in endless monotony. With the greatest caution, scarcely more audibly than the murmur of the fountain, he whistled. He then stood trembling at his own audacity: no fair hand unbolted the door to welcome his daring steps—no sweet voice whispered thanks for the attempt—no kind and counterfeited cough told him he was heard or understood; all save the eternal fountain was silent. Again he tried more loudly; and then instantly withdrew and concealed himself behind a small tree. It was useless to try again; she must have heard it, had she not slept, and slept soundly.

At length he emerged from his hiding-place, determined to retreat, when, at the glass-door which formed the entrance to the lower apartment, he perceived a female form: the cautious

manner in which she placed her small naked foot upon the ground, the timid eagerness with which she looked around, and then at the galleries above, convinced Hammerton that this was the poor girl who had implored him to effect her escape. All was still — even Hammerton held his breath, and watched the approaching figure, who, holding a finger to her lips, had now gained the grass and flew towards him. Her scarcely covered limbs betrayed the beauty of her form.

Hammerton took her in his arms, and instantly led her to the ladder. Not till then had they spoken: they had known each other in the Rover, and now their common slavery and misery bound them closely together.

“ Now, now !” said the impatient girl ;
“ now for our escape !”

“ Impossible !” said Hammerton with eagerness : “ let not precipitation ruin our plan. To take you away now is impossible : half the night is gone—we should be overtaken before noon ; you have no change of dress to conceal your creed. Be advised : no opportunity shall

be lost. I have examined the ground well. At the eastern angle of the wall there is a thick plantation: over that part I will throw a button when the day comes on the night of which we are to make the attempt. You must manage to make the Turk sleep soundly, and in his dress you must escape. We must wait our opportunity, for I am watched more closely than you appear to be. Do not waste your time; learn the language well, and strive to find out in what part of the land we are; when the nearest caravan passes; and glean from the old Turk, when opium makes him loquacious, before he sleeps, how far we are from Tunis, Tetuan, Algiers, Oran, or any port in the Mediterranean: lead him first of all to talk of the interior, of Fez, Morocco—any place or country, so that when we resolve to start, we may strike into the interior at first, rather than go to the coast, in which direction they will follow us. Return, return! Good night!”

“Return!” replied the girl; “to the man who bought me, to him who now slumbers overpowered by opium—to the creature whom

I loathe—who uses me like a part of his household property, who threatens me with the whip ! No ! I will risk it now ! I cannot—I will not return ! If you are the same Hammerton who, like an English sailor, defended your ship to the last, you will not desert me, who now implore your assistance to save me from further misery and degradation !”

“ You must return !” replied Hammerton. “ Before another hour, the first gleam of daylight will be visible : you know at that time every slave is at work, and I should be missed ; the ladder would betray us ; and how, without horses, without knowledge of the country, could we escape !—it would end in your death and my future imprisonment. Be guided, then, by reason.”

“ Reason !” she replied ; “ can that guide me which I have lost ! You are a coward, and afraid of a stick ! You dare not do even what a woman dares ! you cannot be the man who surmounted all the dangers of the boat, and who nobly rushed at the pirate as the only means of saving the ship !”

“You wrong me, indeed you do! Every chance is against us. Hark! a dog in the yard is baying the moon; it will awake the sleepy hounds, who would gladly gain a little coin from their master by exciting his suspicion of me. I am the same I ever was—I will sacrifice my life to save yours; but I will not allow a woman’s precipitation to ruin my plan. Good night!”

Hammerton jumped upon the ladder and gained the wall: he turned to remove it, and found the girl endeavouring to follow him. Knowing that all would be lost if at such a time the escape was attempted, he shook her from the step, which she still grasped with all her force. In vain he endeavoured to raise the ladder; she implored him to rescue her, and falling on her knees, and lifting both her hands as if to Heaven, said, “I will worship you, if you will but save me!”

At this moment Hammerton lifted the ladder clear of her grasp, and removing it to the other side, said, “As I live, I will save you! Think not the worse of me, because I now leave you. Hark! that cursed dog again! his bark

shall be the pretence of my being awake. Go ! go !”

Hammerton replaced the ladder in safety, and creeping to the straw on which he slept, threw himself down and slept soundly. What happened to the girl was unknown to Hammerton ; but from the cautious manner he was watched, and the extra blows and work he received, it was not improbable but that either the button had caused suspicion, or that the foolish girl, unable, after she had strung her nerves to the escape, to return to the bed she loathed, was discovered by some of those rivals so plentiful in a Turkish harem, who, by way of enhancing their own merits, make known the weakness of the Christian girl.

From this time no opportunity occurred of revisiting the garden : another sleeping-place was appointed for Hammerton, and he would have required the eyes and the agility of a cat to have crept from his straw unperceived. His cheerfulness, however, never deserted him. Aware that any precipitate measure would only rivet his chains for life, he never rashly at-

tempted what he foresaw he could not accomplish ; but he turned his attention and his talent to master the difficulties of the language, and when any stranger passed the house, he would enter into conversation with him, and from his remarks try to learn if he was suspected of being a foreigner. He was thus more than once enabled to accomplish his object, in discovering the place of his confinement : he found that he was much further in the interior than he believed, and that his master, although he occasionally visited Algiers, was a subject of the Emperor of Morocco ; that the long tedious journey which Hammer-ton had been compelled to undertake with Mustapha had terminated near the town of El-Harib, which stands about two degrees and a half to the southward of Morocco.

These tidings, confirmed by many who passed the house on their way to El-Harib to join the caravan which every month journeyed to the southward, were by no means agreeable to Hammerton. He knew that to pass to the northward towards Fez, to reach Tangiers, was

the most dangerous route ; for Christian slaves brought from Algiers and Oran were common commodities, and if once detected, he was certain that even the little liberty he enjoyed would be still further curtailed, his life being spared solely upon the principle that no one (who is not mad) kills a horse because it has strayed.

In the mean time, days and weeks slowly passed away ; the usual work of driving the camels or of attending the horses continued ; working in the noonday sun in the fields, and constant labour from sunrise to sunset, went on unvaried ; and before an opportunity occurred to escape, Hamerton had been a prisoner for upwards of five years. During this time, however, he had by his cheerfulness and apparent resignation won the entire confidence of Mustapha, and once or twice had succeeded in beholding from a distance the white handkerchief of the English woman, and, unseen by others, had succeeded in answering the signal. He was now able to pass for a Moor or a true Turk — the language of both were even more familiar to him

than the English; for, with the exception of humming the song of his fellow-captive, his own language had scarcely ever passed his lips since his captivity.

CHAPTER VII.

Escape of the Captives across the Desert.

ADVERSITY is the school of wisdom. Taught by that rigid master we all become either philosophers or stoics; we learn to submit to our fate, and be at least apparently contented with our lot. Hammerton had by his steady application to the duty imposed upon him by his master, and by a strict imitation of the customs of the people by whom he was surrounded, so deceived all, that not even Mustapha, who was generally suspicious, imagined he harboured the least idea of quitting the terrestrial paradise in which, by the blessings of Allah, he was allowed the enormous privilege of being a slave to a true believer.

Mustapha was a steady good Mahometan: he was as convinced of the holy embassy of his master the Prophet, as that the beard grew on his chin; he was very conversant with the Koran, and fervently believing that an angel, as mentioned in that work, was hereafter to weigh men and women in a balance, he resolved to weigh heavy himself, smoked his pipe without moving even a muscle, and grew fat as he grew more indolent. He had a wife—that is, one out of four—to whom he gave the preference: she was suspected, but Mustapha, like Mahomet, had a chapter from the Koran in regard to Ayesha which satisfied him of his wife's purity; but when, after six years' quiet residence in his master's house, he was desired to prepare for the long toilsome journey to Algiers, he lifted his hands and said, "Blessed be Allah, who transported his servant the Prophet from Mecca to Jerusalem in one night, and grant that he may do the same to Mustapha as far as Algiers!"

Previous, however, to his departure, for

he was to accompany his master, he very strongly urged Hammerton to turn Turk ; and Hammerton, quite conscious that no opportunity would offer like the present, appeared to acquiesce, which gave the greatest satisfaction to Mustapha.

“ Why,” said Mustapha, “ will you remain a dog of a Christian, when you can have all the blessings of our religion ? It is the ass which always eats briars, whilst the lamb is cropping the fress grass.”

“ Because,” said Hammerton, “ I was born a Christian : and if you had been born in England, you would have been a Christian.”

“ Allah be praised !” replied Mustapha ; “ my head was not covered with the dust of such a misfortune.”

“ No,” answered Hammerton ; “ and therefore you have shaved it, and covered it with a turban. You may yet live to see the day when the Padishah will let his hair grow, and wear a hat.”

“ Holy Prophet ! what blasphemy !” ejacu-

lated Mustapha: "after your conversion, we would stone you to death for such words."

"—And make a martyr of me to the good cause. But come, Mustapha, before you go on that long tiresome journey to Algiers, to buy more Christians,—and which journey, Allah be praised! I am not condemned to take,—tell me what I am to do to become a good Musulman."

"I'll do that for you," replied Mustapha "You must, besides the outward signs, bathe five times a day, pray at sunrise and sunset, learn the Koran by heart, never eat pork, believe in Mahomet, and have a few wives."

"It is a very pleasant belief," said Hammer-ton, "and whilst you are away I will study it. When do you go to Algiers?"

"In three days' time, we are to take with us, as far as the mountains, one or two of the slaves the Moors have lately been plundering. Those dogs of the devil have no more respect for a true believer than that cur has for its grandfather: they would rob a Christian for the value of his unsanctified garb."

“That is bad,” replied Hammerton, “and you ought to be well attended: how many of the camels will our master take?”

“Six,” replied Mustapha.

“Is there anything,” continued Hammerton, “I ought to give the camels before they go on this long journey?”

“No,” answered the Turk: “if we were going south through the sands, it would be requisite to make them drink as much as possible before they started; but on our route there are good resting-places, and no want of water. No,” he continued, as he smoked; “but you are a good lad to have thought of it. When we come back, I will bring you a wife; and as you intend to turn Mussulman, I will get you a copy of the Koran. And although I know that whatever is to be must be, yet I should like to borrow the wonderful camel Borac, just to carry me to Algiers in a day: you will learn all about that animal in the Koran.”

“How is it,” asked Hammerton, “that our master has never been to Fez since I have been here?”

“’Tis a vile road,” replied Mustapha, “and nothing but tyranny and oppression along it: if soldiers were wanted, they would as soon take him as they would bastinado you. No, no, Allah be praised! our master is no fool; he spends his life as a great man ought to do who is preparing for heaven: he rises early, goes to the bath, smokes his pipe, reclines in the shade, has the terrestrial houris to sing to him, drinks sherbet, sips coffee, says his prayers, eats, drinks, has his choice of the beauties, goes to bed, and never condescends to think, or to do any work. Allah! Allah! what would I not give for one such day of real happiness, to lie by the side of the fountain and hear the birds sing.”

“Yes,” said Hammerton; “on those mossy banks to recline while the bubbling water lulled you to sleep!”

“What know you of this place?” said Mustapha, his mustachios standing out like a cat’s whisker: “has the dog of a Christian dared to profane the retirement of the righteous?”

“Don’t be angry, Mustapha: in my country

we have books, which tell us that in almost all gardens belonging to the faithful there are fountains and mossy banks; and our master being a great lord, I thought he would have what all other great men have."

"'Tis well, Christian," he said: "now go, and I'll make a Turk of you to-morrow."

Hammerton now saw that the time for action was arrived: he began cautiously to collect those things which would be of service, and resolved not to hazard a discovery by venturing to the wall until his master and Mustapha had started on their expedition. One thing alarmed him: it was the usual custom for men of his master's rank to travel with their women; the poor creatures were packed up in a coop like chickens going to market, cautiously excluded from the prying eyes of the curious;—he would therefore remain uncertain whether the English girl would be taken away or not. As inquiry would only provoke suspicion, like his Turkish master he left all things to fate, trusting that the girl by some female

adroitness would contrive to avoid the journey.

The first gleam of the morning saw the master, Mustapha, four slaves all armed, with a hen-coop of women, ready to set forth on their journey to Algiers. Before they started, the master called Hammerton and addressed him : “ Dog,” said he, “ Mustapha has told me that you have seen the error of your belief, and are willing to become a Mussulman : take this — it is the book of the Prophet ; read it, for you can read, I am told. I leave you behind, for you are, Mustapha says, learned as a Hakem : if the women are sick, cure them ; if one dies,” and here he made a sign with his hand that no one could misinterpret. “ Abdallah, take charge of the house, and tremble !” With considerable elegance of manner he held forth his hand for his pipe, which his dirty-mouthed slave had puffed into a light ; and giving his horse the rein, the clattering hoofs resounded along the enclosure, and in a few minutes he and his retinue were far away.

Now came the decisive time. Hammerton

felt that quick pulsation of the heart which preceeds all dangerous undertakings; he felt how absent he must appear in mind to all observers, and he endeavoured to blind the dishonest Abdallah, who, finding himself left behind as master, at once gave himself the airs of a great man, (all emancipated slaves are tyrants,) and threatened to bastinado Hammerton if his work was not better done. With increased alacrity Hammerton continued his labours; he offered his services to his imperious master, who, naturally indolent, now enjoyed the height of Turkish luxury.

In the evening, the camels that remained were brought within the enclosure, and, as usual, suffered to go loose on the ground; but the driver, having profited by Mustapha's advice, made them drink much. Often did Hammerton's looks wander towards the wall, and once he caught a hasty glance of the English girl whose life he was pledged to save.

Abdallah, finding himself free from all restraint, indulged in his love of smoking opium, and, like all those who carry that pas-

sion to excess, he became intoxicated even to madness: he rolled about unconscious of his actions, raved, stamped, and fell. The few remaining slaves, glad to get repose, and wearied from the heat of the day, and the oppressive labour they had undergone, crept to their sleeping-places; whilst Abdallah, having vented his impotent rage in endeavouring to kick Hammerton, sunk from the raving of a madman into the idiot's slumber. No time was now to be lost: Hammerton secured Abdallah's fire-arms and sabre, and with restless impatience watched the moon as it slowly declined towards the horizon.

All at length slept; not even the slightest noise was heard: the brightness of the night was partially obscured by some passing clouds. Hammerton now gently placed the arms in his belt, and having wound up his mind for any act of desperation, he offered up a hasty prayer, took the ladder, placed it against the wall, surmounted, and descended without fear into the garden—the earthly paradise which Mustapha had pictured as the retreat of Sloth fanned by Pleasure—and with the

same signal as before gave notice of his approach. Again the English slave appeared: more anxious than before, she almost pushed her deliverer up the ladder; but again she found the calm reason of her rescuer at variance with her excited hurry.

“You cannot go in that dress,” said Hammerton; “the very circumstance of a woman robed as you are, travelling without the usual preparations of camel skins for conveyance, would excite suspicion. Go dress yourself as a man, if you are disturbed, clap your hands. This night we must escape, or never. Be not over scrupulous; take whatever money or jewels you can find. I have provided some food for ourselves and the camels, — I have made every preparation, and only wait now to hang the water-skins and place you on the camel’s back. Do not trifle with time: I will not leave you, though all the old women of El-Harib come forth to claim you: armed as I am, I may perish, but I will not — cannot retract.”

She immediately obeyed Hammerton, who

spoke as one in authority, whose directions must be complied with. But little time elapsed before she again appeared, dressed as desired : she had, amongst other valuable articles, appropriated to herself a pair of pistols, with some cartridges, and although the dress fitted but badly, yet Hammerton made no objection, but, taking her hand, led her to the ladder. " You must mount first," said she, " or I doubt if I could ascend in safety : seeing you before me will make me brave any danger."

No seaman ever scudded aloft with more sprightliness than did Hammerton. When they had descended on the outer side, the girl looked back : " I have," she said, " taken these pistols of the Turk with me, that in event of our being retaken, I may destroy myself with them, rather than again fall into that horrible captivity. Now quick, and let us away."

" Not quite so fast, young lady," said Hammerton : " before we go, I must borrow a spare turban and skull-cap from my new master Abdallah ; his pipe and tobacco-pouch I must have also, and the spare travelling-tent and pole will

not be useless lumber. We have a hard game to play, and we must be attentive to the customs which prevail in these parts: a man without a pipe would be like a Turk without a turban."

Hammerton soon reappeared: a camel was laden with the water-skins, tent, and a quantity of millet and barley-cakes: some dates and brans were also placed upon the animal; a pack-saddle, such as are used in that country, was covered with some linen, and the fair fugitive was placed on it. Hammerton warned her that the animal would, unlike a horse, rise with its hind feet first. On the other camel he was soon astride, and both moved forward. When clear of the ground and on the road, Hammerton gave his companion this lesson of advice: "Never speak English if any one is near; keep this pipe in your mouth—never mind its not being lighted; and do not on any account complain of fatigue. Remember that the step of the camel is as light and as noiseless as a lady's footfall on the softest turf: keep a vigilant eye, therefore, behind

you; for if I do not lead, the camels will not go more than three miles an hour.—And now, fair lady, I must change your name for you,—for the future you must answer to Sidi Kalif: my own must undergo an alteration also, and you will remember me only as Abdallah Chebic. We have a desperate undertaking before us;—you must for a time unsex yourself and be a man, or I fear you will sink under the severe privations we must suffer.”

“Abdallah,” replied his companion, “your orders shall be obeyed: I who rebuked you with being a coward will not myself sink under the imputation. Death is far preferable to the life I have led; and rather than again fall into the hands of that old Turk, I would encounter any peril or privation. This camel’s motion,” continued the fugitive, “is not unlike the disagreeable pitch of the Rover.”

“The ship of the Desert,” replied Hammer-ton, “although famed for the silence of its progress, does, as you say, pitch about like a jolly-boat in a head-sea. We shall get accus-

tomed to it, however, before we arrive at our journey's end."

"And how distant may that spot be which we so anxiously seek, Abdallah?"

"That, fair Sidi, is as yet uncertain. I have resolved not to attempt to pass to the northward, because my namesake will mount the dromedary and scour the country in that direction, and those animals have gone more than one hundred miles in the day, whilst our dull sailing ships hardly ever exceed thirty. I am now, if the stars do not deceive me, or my compass fail in its constancy, steering to the south; we shall leave El-Harib on the right, and by keeping the camels on their full pace, we shall overtake the caravan going to Timbuctoo. I propose to join it as merchants going to the Gold Coast. The rest we must leave to chance; we may be prisoners of the Moors before night, and then all our plans will be useless.—I must make these camels go quicker by singing to them; they require the voice to encourage them, and they know the song of their driver as well as I remember one sung by the fair

sultana of a Turk when she rebuked me for not daring to save her."

"No more of that, Abdallah, I entreat you; if you knew what I have suffered, you would instantly forgive my hasty reproach: I feel now like the bird escaped from its cage, yet fearing that my wilder brethren may tear me to pieces. But why did you leave that dromedary for Abdallah to hunt us with?"

"For this reason: had I taken it, only one could have used it; it would have outstepped the camel, or it would have been fatigued by its one continued dull pace. I know Abdallah well; he will go the very route he ought not. Luckily we leave no trace behind us, or a Moor would follow our path as surely as the blood-hound does its prey. Try now to go to sleep; for we must continue our journey all this night and all the morrow without stopping."

"If I attempt to sleep, I shall fall," replied Hammerton's companion; "for my whole strength is requisite to keep me in security."

"Custom, Sidi Kalif, is a great master:

many an hour you will sleep on that faithful beast, if we do but escape to-morrow's danger."

Hammerton now commenced singing a Moorish song which he had learnt, at the sound of which the camels quickened their pace.

"It is hard," said Sidi, "to sing when life is at stake!"

"It is harder to be silent when hope inspires the song. On your left side you will find some dates; eat them sparingly, and take great care to watch the water-skins, that they do not leak; the long desert before us, if all be true, will try our courage and our patience."

"There are men behind us!" said Sidi.

"Keep cool," continued Hammerton: "it is God's mercy to us,—they are, like ourselves, going in search of the caravan, which left El-Harib yesterday."

Here Hammerton began another Moorish song, having enjoined silence upon his companion, and the camels again quickened their pace: their followers maintained their relative distance, without appearing to approach them.

In vain did Sidi endeavour to make her camel approach nearer to Hammerton's; the animal knew its station, and would not move one inch faster than its usual stride. Hammerton, watchful for her safety, told her not to jerk the rope, for the camel might lie down; and reassured her, by pointing out those behind which followed one after the other like wild-ducks in a flight.

It was now growing towards morning. The sudden gleams of light which lit up the eastern horizon ushered in the day; and already might a grey horse be seen a mile off, (the Turkish way of estimating daylight,) when Hammerton perceived his friends astern. Keeping more to the eastward, the country round about them was entirely open—there was no human habitation; the distant hills, with Mount Atlas overtopping all, were just visible behind them; whilst in front, the prospect appeared like entering on eternity: there was no tree to guide them—all seemed one dreary plain; the grass over which the camels had trodden during the night, from the time they had left

the road to El-Harib, was now fast changing its verdure into sand: the strong refraction of light, as the sun shone, placing a shrub, as it were, high in the heavens, and enlarging it into a tall tree, whilst a camel in that direction, with a man on its back, appeared like a huge castle with an immense turret, convinced Hammerton that to the south-east all was sand. In front there seemed an interminable sea; behind them, the mountains which greet the homeward-destined caravans after their tedious journey through the Desert.

“ There are but three men near us, Sidi: we will edge towards them; we must find out whether they suspect us. Keep you silent; from them I must glean their destination: we may find friends in them who may prove most useful. They will not be afraid of us; and the more we are, the less likely are the Moors to attack us.”

With this determination, Hammerton altered his direction more to the eastward, the camel of Sidi following close in his wake. When within speaking-distance, Hammerton gave the

true "Salam Aleikoum," which was returned in the same manner, both parties rather distrusting their neighbours: indeed, the quick eye of Sidi saw the hands of the second and third men upon their pistols, and she nearly betrayed her sex and country by expressing her fears in English.

"We seek the caravan going to Timbuctoo," said Abdallah; "and, Allah be praised! we have encountered those of the true faith, who will not be misers of their intelligence."

The leading man of the strangers bowed gracefully after the Oriental manner, and replied, "We also seek the caravan; by night we ought to overtake it; for its first day's march is always slow, to allow those who have missed it through negligence to repair the error. In this case, we cannot rebuke each other."

Here the old gentleman, whose face bespoke a careless disregard of danger and a glorious defiance of fatigue, took his pipe, and, after striking a light and placing it in the bowl, he drew in the smoke strongly, and then offered it to Hammerton. This calumet of peace and good

will was eagerly received ; the second man also proffered a pipe to Sidi. The incautious and yet watchful lady, not having practised this art, with eager breath drew in the smoke, and forthwith commenced a salute of coughs, which lasted some minutes.

“ ’Tis a bad omen,” said the second man, rather displeased at this unfortunate cough, “ to find the offering of friendship sicken in the mouth.”

“ He is young,” replied Hammerton, “ and my brother’s sickness has been long. Our Hakem, who, by the blessing of Allah, is wiser than men in general, forbade him to smoke ; his greediness to receive the proffered friendship, and the long restraint from it, occasioned the cough : may your hand honour the pipe of Abdallah Chebic !”

This set all smooth again, the Turk remarking that “ the boy was indeed young and sickly to face so great a journey.” Hammerton, although he saw that he could pass muster with either Moor or Turk, began to tremble for young Sidi : the great change from a harem

to a desert, without preparation, without knowledge of the camel's stride, would soon fatigue her; and then what was to be done! To loiter behind the caravan would be to court destruction: pirates on shore hang upon the large fleet of inland ships, as privateers do upon the ocean. Had the first day's march been trifling, and the fatigue increased by degrees, a child might be weaned from luxury to rough usage; but after the dull, unvarying monotony of a Turkish garden, to be placed upon a pack-saddle on a camel's back, and have to sit there from eleven at night until eight o'clock the next evening, with hardly one hour's intermission, would try the mettle of a huntsman. However, the excitement occasioned by the fear of being followed, enabled her to bear up against the sensation of fatigue and desire of sleep.

"The boy," said the second man, "looks behind him at the mountains, as if he had left the black-eyed beauty to weep until his return; he sends a kiss on every breeze, and lifts his eyes to Allah, as if to pray for her he loves."

" 'Tis nearly so," replied Hammerton: "be

yond El-Harib dwells his favourite sister: our journey, if prosperous, will be the last we make; and the poor boy may well feel pain at leaving her he loves to face the dangers of the desert."

"Allah be merciful!" said the first man, "has the sickly boy been here before?"

"No," replied Hammerton, "nor myself either. Our trade was carried on at Algiers; but there no luck befel us. Almost ruined; we hardly even hoped for this opportunity to retrieve our fortunes: we must trust to destiny."

"The winter of sorrow," replied the leading man, "is succeeded by the reviving strength of spring, and the darkest night is followed by the brightest day:—may your destiny be good!"

The two parties continued together, exchanging few words. Whenever the camels grew short in their stride, the song soon cheered them onwards; and thus, until the heat of the sun became too oppressive to be borne, they journeyed forward. There yet remained some signs of vegetation, and here and there were still some small shrubs, and wells were not infrequent.

On arriving at one of these, the three men halted, dismounted, and, turning their camels adrift to feed, threw themselves down and sought repose. Hammerton's camel instantly stopped, and it required some little persuasion to make it move on again.

“Whither go you?” asked the first speaker: “we are well provided, and in the name of the Prophet, who enjoins hospitality, the stranger is welcome.”

“We thank you,” replied Hammerton; “but the more we separate now, the more likely we are to gain our ends. If I see the caravan from yonder tree, I will wave my fold from its summit; and then we can repose together when the object is attained.”

No sooner had they passed beyond the reach of voice, than Sidi said, in a weak, faltering tone, “We must stop, or I shall faint.”

“Courage! now or never!” replied Hammerton: “gain but yonder tree, and underneath its shade you shall repose. To stop now, with the fiery sun upon us, would be fatal; your next

ride shall be easier. See! see! it is near us; continue for half a mile, and then half your troubles will be over."

"O that I could die, and thus release you!" said the poor wearied girl. "I fear I shall now drag you to the earth in your generous efforts to save me: but I have the heart of a woman, and if I cling until my nails are torn from my fingers, I will endeavour to gain that tree. But pray urge the camels forward!"

With a tremulous voice, for Hammerton was much fatigued, he sang the Moorish song; and the faithful creatures, apparently unwearied, soon gained the tree. He now dismounted, and making the other camel kneel down, took the fainting Sidi in his arms and laid her in the shade. The skins of water were then taken off; and after bathing her temples, the poor creature awoke to experience all the miseries of life.

In the mean time, Hammerton, whose generous disposition prompted him to forget his own troubles in alleviating hers, got some dates and biscuits. With these and some water a spare

repast was made. But Hammerton worked and ate at the same time. His prudent foresight had prompted him to take with him one of the skins used to carry women: this he arranged with sticks to act as stretchers, and with the rope he slung this uneasy bed on one side, and balanced it on the other with the water-skins. Having done this, he placed the saddle for a pillow, and covered it over with some of his friend Abdallah's garments. He then fell asleep himself; but even in that sleep he was sensible of all around him.

How long he slept, he knew not; but he was awakened by a cry from Sidi for assistance. The drowsiness of over-fatigue almost overpowered him, when the sound of a pistol startled him into activity. Before him stood Abdallah, whose name he had usurped, and whose garments he had stolen. The ball aimed at him as he lay sleeping had missed him and slightly wounded his companion. Before he could recover his surprise or find his fire-arms, his old associate had levelled a pistol at him, and but for the fren-

zied effort of the girl, he must have been killed. She had drawn a pistol, hardly knowing whether it was loaded, and, pulling the trigger, it went off: Abdallah fell, and Hammerton's defender fainted. The affrighted and wounded dromedary, which had been fired at and hit by Hammerton, turned short round, and with the corpse of him who rode it dangling by its side,—for it was sustained by one leg being entangled in the trappings,—it took its quick flight towards the mountains.

Having restored the warrior Sidi to herself, and with words which came from a feeling heart expressed his gratitude, Hammerton bound up the wound which was on the left arm.

“We must be moving,” said Hammerton: “our friends are already mounted, and I am anxious to keep before them; for they will be a rear-guard for us. I marked the course with my compass which we steered before.—And now, fair lady, let me lift you into your bed; and trust to me to be vigilant in endeavouring to repay the life you have given me.”

The slight pressure of Sidi's hand which held that of Hammerton was gently increased, as if she feared to make this first advance which gratitude to her deliverer prompted. He placed her gently in the skin, and, with apparently more solicitude for her comfort than when they first began their journey, said, "Sleep, sleep, pretty Sidi!" He gently placed his finger on her eyelids, and with a smile continued, "This will darken the day, which before was too bright for mortal sight." A blush came over the girl's cheeks, and a sigh escaped the ears of all but his for whom it was intended.

Hammerton, much relieved by his slight sleep, now mounted his camel, and directing it in a south-by-east direction, found he was going exactly to the same point as his friends behind him. The heat was oppressive, but every moment made it less so. The sun was fast sinking; still no sign of the caravan was visible; not a sound disturbed the profound stillness of the air; the camel's spongy feet trod silently on the sand. In vain, as the haze grew less, did Hammerton

strain his eyes. Another hour, and daylight would be passed : what then was to be done ? “ If we do not see the smoke by sunset,” said he to his companion, “ we must stop and keep close to our friends. By them we must be guided ; and when night comes, we must sleep near them. We will make the best use of this hour, and keep the beasts at their quickest pace : if we could but guide those near us to the caravan, it would be a service not easily forgotten.”

“ Hush !” she replied, as she raised herself up so as to look over the edge of the skin ; “ I hear the cry of an animal more on our right : listen ! again I hear it distinctly.”

“ I cannot hear it,” said Hammerton ; “ but no chance must be thrown away.” He altered his course, as he jokingly said, “ two points to starboard,” and kept the head of the ship of the Desert at south-by-west. Both now strained their ears, still no sound was conveyed to them : at length, charming sight ! a column of smoke was observed to rise gradually in the air. Hammerton immediately waved a scarf affixed to

his scimitar, and kept it in motion until his friends behind him had answered it, and altered their direction. The smoke was seen on the right hand, and shortly afterwards the camels lifted up their long noses, as if they had received intelligence through a different sense : — the caravan was before them slowly wending on its way.

CHAPTER VIII.

Adventures in the Desert.

THE caravan had halted ; and this was the last night of repose, as henceforth they were to travel by night and rest by day.

Hammerton had never seen a caravan before, and he became alarmed at the multitude with whom he was about to associate. Observing a vacant space between two loads of merchandise, he stopped his camel, erected his tent, and placed his wounded companion in safety. The strangers with whom they had conversed during the day pitched their tents near him, and came to make inquiries as to the cause which had occasioned the report of fire-arms. The story was related exactly as it happened, with only this addition—that the man was a predatory Moor, and in the act of getting off his dromedary when

the sick brother awoke—that the Moor had fired at the one awake and wounded him,—that Abdallah was in the act of defence when Sidi fired and shot him. The strangers were eloquent in praise of the sick boy, who lay quietly wrapped up in the corner of the tent, apparently seeking repose.

In all caravans, during the first day's march, there are camel-merchants and slaves ; both the beasts and drivers being for sale, the price of each gradually increases as the caravans increase their distance. Being rid of the unwelcome presence of the strangers, the gold was produced which Sidi had purloined : there was ample for the purchase of a slave and a camel ; and these two, themselves just released from slavery, were but too glad to buy a fellow-creature to assist them in their perilous undertaking. The lad whom they bought was a Moor, who was forthwith installed as camel-driver.

The water-skins were filled, and our two adventurers sat down to their first caravan supper. This repast, under the name of *Dokhnou*,

which is the flour of the millet mixed with honey, was greedily devoured : to this was added a few kabobs, bought from one of the venders of mutton-flesh in El-Harib. The Moor was lodged on the ground under heaven's canopy ; whilst Sidi took possession of one side of the tent, and Abdallah of the other. Hitherto all had gone on apparently well,—that they were under no fear of discovery was evident ; and having associated themselves with their wandering brethren, although they looked forward still to many privations, their ultimate escape seemed now to be certain.

The caravan consisted of at least three hundred persons, and more than six hundred camels. The people composing it were a mixture of Moors and Arabs,—merchants from Fez—traders from Tripoli, Tunis, and Algiers. All sorts of mongrel dialects might be heard ; and on this night, as a kind of festivity before a general fast, the camp was in an uproar : rude music broke upon the ear ; whilst venders of flour, dates, beans, or millet, kept bawling aloud in pursuit of their occupation. Although considerably fatigued, the

novelty of the situation and the excitement of their escape rendered our party indisposed to avail themselves of the hours so necessary to restore weary nature.

Hammerton had taken the precaution to fasten the entrance of their tent, and, previously to the night's slumber, proposed to dress the wound of his companion. There is nothing in an Englishman beholding the bare arm of a woman; but in climates where females are carefully excluded from sight,—where the face, excepting in slaves, is seldom seen,—the least exposure appears criminal. This was Sidi's first feeling; but familiarity soon wore off this restraint.

Hammerton forgot his usual caution, and spoke in English. It happened that when Abdallah pursued the fugitives, he came upon the three men who were reclining under the tree: one only was awake, and seeing the man approach, he walked towards his camels in order to protect them. After the usual "Salam Aleikoum," Abdallah asked if two persons had been seen, one young and like a

woman, the other with a cast of countenance resembling the infidels who sometimes frequented the coast. The stranger directed Abdallah to the tree. The curiosity of the wandering Arab was excited; and although he kept the secret from his companions, he resolved to ascertain if his conjecture were right, that the lad who was so cautiously desired by the learned Hakem to avoid tobacco was of the sex unaccustomed to pipes. Accordingly, whilst Hamerton was carefully dressing the wound of his companion, this man listened outside the tent; and not only did so, but, through a small hole not perceptible from the inside, was able to obtain a sight of the beauty of the Christian girl as her white arm was displayed, and her countenance animated by gratitude. Satisfied that they were Christians, with the wily character of his countrymen he kept the secret to himself, and retired to his own tent too fatally convinced of the secret.

At early dawn each party were busy preparing for the route. During this interval another consultation had been held, whether, hav-

ing despatched their pursuer, it would not be better to shape a different course, and endeavour to gain some part of the Mediterranean : but fear that their escape had become generally known determined them at all risks to continue with the caravan to Timbuctoo, and then to endeavour, by joining another caravan, to reach the coast.

With this intention, they altered their garbs, so as to appear rather inferior merchants, which indeed their miserable retinue sufficiently attested ;—the Moorish boy, unused to the kindness he now experienced, already began to consider his slavery a blessing.

Their journey at first was over the hard soil covered with light sand and loose stones. The pathway made by frequent caravans had not been obliterated : except this slight trace of man, the whole scene was wildly desolate—not a shrub nor tree was to be seen—all around was bleak and barren. The desert was like the sea, occasionally showing small waves of sand, which, as the breeze increased, swept with frightful velocity over the surface of the earth: some-

times the sky was unclouded, and the rays of the sun became almost intolerable ; the easterly wind caused the water to evaporate, and dry up the skins until the unmoistened bags cracked ; sometimes, when the welcome spot where Providence had provided water was hailed with delight, upon being tasted it was found so salt as to be dangerous to drink.

Day after day was thus passed and the companions ventured not to utter a word to any but their first friends and their slave, and night was the time when the cool air invited them to push forward. The different wells of Mayara, of Marabouty, of Ekseif, of Amoultaf, were passed, until they arrived at Telig, where the caravans occasionally met that came from Cape Blanc, near which the Great Desert of Sahara begins, and over a part of which the caravan had already journeyed. To accomplish the journey from Telig to Cape Blanc, it was necessary to go still further to the southward, to wells called Tichyt, and thence again in a west-north-west course to the sea : this information was gleaned from their Moor-

ish slave, who, having made frequent journeys with the caravans, had passed over this track before.

The wells of Telig are situated in a valley formed by a long chain of granite mountains, sterile and bare, which extend from east to west: the soil immediately in the vicinity of the wells is of large yellow sand, having but little verdure. No sooner was the water scented by the camels, than they broke away from all restraint and rushed to the spot. In vain did the drivers apply the rope's end—they would turn short round and rush to the place: the consequence was, that the wells were soon nearly choked with sand, which the eager animals had trodden therein. It required much time before the Moors who accompanied the caravan could clear the pits of this incumbrance, and before the thirsty men could gratify the imperious wants of nature. In spite, however, of sand or human beings, the camels disputed the point of priority and gained the victory.

These wells are only four feet in depth;

but they yield a plentiful supply of water. The taste is rather brackish; but this was not discovered for the first five hours. The sight was indeed curious. Hammerton forgot his charge; and Sidi, equally fearless of danger, rushed between the heads of the camels, and with outstretched arm filled the calabash. It was taken from her grasp, before her thirst was half satisfied, by the Moorish boy, who at this moment for the first time doubted her sex: there was a scuffle to retain the gourd, and the dress of Sidi being torn open in the affray, her bosom discovered her to be a woman. To remedy the disaster, she relinquished the calabash, which the Moorish boy returned to her after he had slaked his burning thirst, his eyes too plainly indicating the discovery he had made.

The mishap was communicated to Hammer-ton. To sell the Moor would not have made the business better; to make him a confidant would be to court treachery, for all of that nation are low, cunning, insincere, holding Christians in the lowest estimation, and ever ready to seize them and commit them to slavery.

Could the Moor but believe Hammerton to be a Christian, he would have sold his master. It was resolved between them, therefore, to make no allusion to what had occurred, but to be more observant of the Mahometan hours of prayer; and from that moment Hammerton was never seen without his Koran. His memory being good, he soon learnt by heart many verses, with which he studiously embellished his remarks; and amongst the few who knew him, he was accounted a most rigid and exemplary Mussulman.

The caravan had now rested its usual time; the water-skins of the different merchants were filled, and the camels had recovered a little from the fatigue they had undergone. The near approach of the caravan from Timbuctoo now made it requisite to decide which route the travellers should take, and finally they resolved upon joining the caravan which was expected. In order to do this without suspicion, Sidi was announced as being very ill from his wound, which indeed had never properly healed.

The most constant visiter at their tent was

the Arab who had directed Abdallah in his search : he watched them closely, and was often seen in conversation with the Moorish boy. The determination to wait was not conveyed to the slave ; and when the usual announcement was made that the caravan would advance on its route when the sun went down, preparations were commenced by Hammerton as usual, and no doubt existed in the mind of the Moor but that the journey would be continued by them that night. During the bustle of removal, Hammerton continued to gain time by arranging the conveyance for his sick brother ; and time crept away until they alone remained at the wells.

Far away along the inhospitable desert the track of the slow-wending caravan might be still traced in the sand, for no breeze arose to obliterate the steps of the travellers : still the ear could catch the distant voice of the drivers as they cheered on their camels to increase their speed. Gradually these sounds grew fainter and more faint, until the dead silence of the spot made even the bold Ham-

merton tremble at the solitude he had courted. Left desolate in the midst of the great Sahara, their own voices sounded unusually loud, for the air was not disturbed even by a breeze; and Sidi sank into dejection, frightened at the plan adopted, and fearful of some unpleasant results. In the mean time, the last tinge of daylight had disappeared; the camels were picketed to the ground, or those sagacious animals would soon have followed their former associates; the Moor walked lonely and moodily round the solitary tent, and Hammer-ton betook himself to the hardest task in affliction—that of affording consolation when he needed it himself.

“It is a bold step we have taken,” commenced Sidi: “we might be this night made slaves to the Moors, who not unfrequently hover about a caravan and examine the place where it has rested.”

“I do not fear that,” replied Hammerton; “neither do I fear anything whilst Sidi is near me: her good fortune will keep us safe from danger.”

“Good fortune!” replied the girl with astonishment: “my life, like yours, has been one of suffering and misfortune.”

“In this solitude,” said Hammerton, “where the human voice is rarely heard, we must not be silent, or sleep may overtake us, and thus we may be surprised. To keep off the drowsy effects of weariness, we must continue to converse, and endeavour to find some theme whereon to engage our attention.”

“Alas!” replied Sidi, “the sense of my misfortunes is ever present to my mind,—I can speak of nothing else.”

“Confide then your sorrows to me,” replied Hammerton; “in becoming acquainted with your grief, I may haply assuage it.”

“Mine is a sad tale. I am the daughter of an officer in the navy. My father, after having distinguished himself in many actions, did not receive the proper meed of his exertions. I grew up under his eye, until, oh, fatal day! my affections became engaged to one who had no means of supporting me. My mother opposed the union. Opposition is fatal in love.

“ I have no motive to conceal what followed : you have known me as the slave of a Turk, confined in his harem. In a word then, my admirer having won my affections, basely deserted me, and sailed for the West Indies, leaving me a prey to the deepest despondency. In vain I wrote, stating my despair ; he had been removed to a floating sepulchre, the *Shark*, and having drunk as if courting oblivion, he died at the hospital, my own brother hearing from his dying lips his repentance.

“ My brother’s letters hardened my father’s heart against me : I was driven from his house. With my own hands I was enabled to support myself. My mother endeavoured in vain to soften a father’s anger : his honour had received a blow he could not survive, and he died.

“ No sooner was he dead than I joined my only remaining parent. Her brother held a situation at Malta, and being unmarried, was anxious for society : he wrote to us to leave a country in which poverty must be our lot, forwarding money to pay our passage. We embarked on

board the packet;—I am here, and my mother a menial servant in Algiers.

“ I feel relieved now that I have frankly told you all but my name—that is better concealed ; for time may change our situations, and you might perhaps sail under my brother. His feelings should never be outraged by knowing the sad fate of his sister.—But where is the Moor ?”

Hammerton rose immediately. He had been so riveted by the simple relation of his companion’s misfortunes, that, for a moment, he forgot his usual prudence. He called aloud for the slave, but he was unanswered: he rushed from the tent and found his worst fears realised—the Moor had gone, and taken with him one of the camels, and the water-skins; the rest of the articles were safe, and were instantly removed into the tent. For the present, the theft could not occasion much discomfort; it would be felt more as they advanced, when they would have no convenience for carrying the proper supply of water.

To follow the slave was useless: the night,

though not dark, had already begun to show some disposition to be windy; the track in the desert would, no doubt, be lost; and in the event of not overtaking the Moor or reaching the caravan, death from thirst must ensue. They had an ample supply of millet and of dates; with these they could hold out until assistance came—to move must be fatal.

Sidi's spirit rose with the necessity of the case; she now appeared more resolute than her companion.

“If we die,” she said, “we only meet that inevitable fate which in a few years must be ours; but we will struggle to the last.—Come, Hammerton,” she continued, “you shall not despise me for my fears; by your side I am ready to live or die; and you will better support my resolution by showing me that hope has not forsaken you. Our case was much more desperate in the house of the Turk;—six years did we seek for a propitious moment, and shall we droop now, when the caravan may be here to-morrow, and both of us reach England in three months?”

Hammerton looked at her with a steadiness of manner shown only in despair. "You shall not outdo me in words, although you are a woman: I will cling more closely to you now that our fate is inevitable; fear not that we shall fall into slavery without a struggle. I will not survive your fall.—But you only look, I fear, at the bright side: the Moor is leagued with the Arabs we first met; he knows we cannot move from the wells or we must die of thirst: he knows us for Christians, and he despises us doubly for having held him as a slave. Our fate is sealed! I cannot shut my eyes to what must follow. We cannot fly—we cannot escape: around us is the vast Desert, a trackless sand, to guide us through which we require the experienced eye that recognises every stone; the wind has blown the sand over the camels' tracks. It is useless to waste words. I almost fear to leave you whilst I take the camels to the wells: stir not from the tent, and I will soon return."

"No, Hammerton," replied the girl; "you have claimed me as a wife,—it is my duty to divide the toil with you. I must learn how to

guide these unwieldy animals, for I would rather do anything than remain alone in this awful and mysterious silence ; my voice seems to return to me, and there is a depression in our loneliness which nothing can cheer—not even those bright stars.”

“They form the southern cross,” replied Hamerton, “and are the only lamps which guide the caravan.—Even now I almost feel inclined to try to escape, and trust to my memory of the position of the stars: but the water-skins are gone, and Death would ride behind us at sunrise.”

The camels were taken to the wells, and drank freely. They were then allowed to browse about the side of the hill, and glean the scanty grass or herbs which still remained ; while Hamerton, taking the hand of Sidi, led her to the tent, and after offering up his prayers, endeavoured to obtain some sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

A Companion in the Desert.—The Simoom.—Death in the Sahara.

By daylight both were on the alert. The camels were ready, and seemed to welcome their masters. The wind had subsided, and Hamerton found, on examination of the track of the caravan, that not the slightest mark remained, and he and his companion were, like Adam and Eve, alone. Their conversation naturally turned to the expected arrival of the caravan from Timbuctoo.

“It ought to arrive by the day after tomorrow at the farthest,” said Sidi; “and if gold does not fail, we will soon repair our error, and survive the difficulties by which we are surrounded. But I fear my strength is not

equal to my resolution ; I feel the approach of fever, and here in this dreadful solitude must I linger without the kind hand of affection which woman bestows upon woman in affliction. If I die, remember me as your companion in misfortune, and may Heaven restore you to your country and friends !”

“ Poor Sidi !” said Hammerton ; “ I have nothing to soothe your sorrows but words ! You had better remain in the tent, and not expose yourself to the sun.”

“ How can I consent to lose sight of the only human being in this immense solitude !—the very camels seem aware of their dreary situation, and come near us, as if to borrow courage from companionship with their masters. I tremble when alone, and my mind sickening with my body, makes me fancy the deceptive water before us, a sea rushing onward to swallow us up. Hammerton, do not leave me ; I cannot bear to be alone : my fancy conjures up an approaching enemy on every side. See, that large tower which appears rising from the lake !—Ah ! as I live, it moves !”

Hammerton, who had supported Sidi in his arms, gazing with melancholy solicitude on her pale countenance, turned his eyes in the direction she indicated, and there beheld the large tower evidently moving in the refraction of the mirage.

The fear of an approaching enemy placed both upon their guard; they instantly drew nearer to their camels, and the sagacious animals, seemingly aware of the approach of one of their own kind, elongated their necks and screamed a welcome.

The stranger seemed unable to control his animal; it rushed to the well, and having slaked its thirst, rose suddenly and dismounted its rider. Hammerton instantly approached: the rider lay apparently dead; his eyes were sunken, his face thin, and, although life was not extinct, the pulse seemed to flutter in the last struggle before death. The stranger was removed to the tent where the hand of Sidi chafed his burning forehead, whilst Hammerton bathed his heated face and moistened his parched lips. By degrees animation faintly returned; the stran-

ger opened his eyes, but closed them almost instantly. Some millet soaked in water and sweetened with honey was placed in the stranger's mouth, and after a short time the action of swallowing was perceptible; but overcome by the unwonted exertion, he fell into a heavy slumber.

“Be careful,” said Hammerton to Sidi, as he withdrew her from the tent, “not to betray either your sex, your country, or your religion. Every word spoken must be Moorish; our tale, that we are travellers from El-Harib, bound to Timbuctoo;—sickness had overtaken us, and we await the caravan going to Cape Blanco, in order to retrace our steps by that route, as no other to Timbuctoo will arrive for two months. This man must be an Arab: he will become our friend when once he has eaten salt with us. Remember, brother, you are sick.”

“I need no friendly hint to make me feel that, Hammerton; although this incident has excited me much, and I feel better. We must ensure his protection by kindness.”

“Most certainly, if we feared him, we

could easily rid ourselves of our apprehensions ; but I would rather live to fear him than reduce the living to our lonely selves. When he awakes, do you appear reading this Koran. He may extricate us from our miserable situation."

Hammerton searched the camel of the stranger. The water-skins were dry and hard,—they had not contained water, apparently, for some days ; not a mouthful of food remained,—the animal seemed almost starving. The saddle was removed and placed in the tent. Universal silence prevailed, and, except the voice of Sidi, which occasionally broke into prayer from the Koran, all was a still, solemn solitude.

When the stranger awoke, he cast his eyes round the tent with some indication of fear : he arose, apparently in health, felt for his arms, remarked his saddle, and in a quick, hurried manner asked, " Where am I ? "

" With friends," replied Hammerton, " who will relieve you : this pledge of friendship is offered."

The stranger took some salt and swallowed it : Hammerton and Sidi did the same.

“ ’Tis well,” continued the stranger : “ what brings you here ?”

Hammerton related the truth.

“ Natives of El-Harib ?” said the stranger.

“ No,” replied Hammerton ; “ but natives of the sea-shore beyond.”

Apparently satisfied, the stranger opened the tent, looked at the sun, cast his eyes towards the point from which he had come, and having for a moment watched his camel, took the water-skins and walked to the wells.

Hammerton accompanied him, and asked him if it was his intention to stay with them, or if he could guide them to some better place.

“ I came,” replied the stranger, “ for money, and nearly lost my life : you have restored the one, which shall be yielded up, or I will have my due. I am one of the Trâkânt Moors : like the Arabs in their deserts, we are masters in that of Sahara ; we exact tribute from all caravans passing through our sandy inheritance.

I with my men was to have met the caravan going to Timbuctoo, here ; but we were assailed by our own brethren who inhabit the Desert farther eastward, who drove us from our encampment, routed and dispersed us. I fled, and arrived here.—Allah be praised ! all is told. You have restored me ; I will not leave the stranger to perish. In that caravan we have three of our men, dressed as merchants ; they will exact the payment, and return with the caravan going to the coast, whither you seek to go. But we must away from this spot : our hostile brethren intend to attack the returning caravan, and are now within two days' march of us. The skins will be soaked by evening ; prepare yours, and those of your sick brother : an hour before the sun goes down we must remove ; for if our messenger has met with the returning caravan, it will turn to the westward, avoiding these wells, the best in the Desert. Fear not for your guide ; I know every one of the few shrubs which grow upon this moving face of nature. Load your camels : if the enemy

come, you are slaves, and I a burthen to be easily disposed of."

Hammerton then related the flight of the Moorish servant, and the circumstance which had attended it.

"Fear not," continued the stranger: "from the description, those Arabs are our spies; none dare strike if Hossein holds up his hands. But I am no longer a chief: my skins must do for all; by to-morrow morning we will be better provided with food. Before sunset we move: go comfort your brother,—he shall be my son, and I will be his father. I was not quite so near death as you thought, and in my apparent slumbers I learnt that I was preserved, and felt the hand of friendship chafe the forehead of adversity. We have eaten salt; we must now shake off the black dust of misfortune, and cover our faces with whiteness:—I will lead you to the coast. Prepare some food, Abdallah: to-morrow we shall replenish from one of our secret stores.—Hark!" Hossein threw himself on the sand, and, keeping his ear close to the surface, listen-

ed without breathing. "The hunted lion fears the wind," he continued; "and hunted man the breath of human nature.—Go, get ready: I will prepare the camels for the journey."

In the evening they left the wells, and struck off to the north-west. There appeared no speck to guide them, and yet their route was in a straight direction. The camels stalked on quietly; not a word was uttered until nearly midnight, when Hossein abruptly remarked, "You are not natives of El-Harib, you say; neither are you from Algiers, Tripoli, nor Tetuan: your speech, though good, is not of the Trâkânt Moors, or of the people about Morocco; you have another language—what is it?"

"We have eaten salt together, Hossein," answered Hammerton,—“we are pledged to each other: why, therefore, this suspicion?"

"You doubt who I am," replied Hossein, "who thus leads you over the Desert. I, seeing you have no merchandise, doubt your story: no man goes from El-Harib to Timbuctoo for the sake of the ride. I am your

friend, your protector: without me, you would tarve—”

“And without us,” interrupted Hammerton, “you would have—”

“—Died,” continued Hossein, calmly. “It was not my destiny: Allah is merciful! When the day comes, I shall be ready. Whilst I live, I pray as I travel; and in robbing a caravan, Allah is never forgotten. What says the Koran, which you read? ‘It shall be no crime in you if ye seek an increase from your Lord by trading during the pilgrimage.’ Life is a pilgrimage; we trade with the strongest, and lighten the burthen of the weakest. From this you know my life: be candid with me.”

“I will,” said Hammerton, “if by the sacred pledge, and by the Koran, you will swear not to leave us.”

“I swear,” said Hossein, “be ye infidel dog or true believer,—Moor, opposed to me by revenge,—slave, sold and escaped,—or leper-stricken Jew, never to leave nor harm you; but, as a man, a chief, and a Trâkânt, to do the

rights of hospitality according to our creed. Speak !”

“ We are Christian slaves, escaped from misery. We were taken in a ship, sold at Algiers, conveyed to El-Harib, or near it, and after six or seven years’ cruel bondage, have endeavoured to fly.—Have you a father or a mother, a brother or a sister, whom you love? If so, would you not break from captivity to see them once more before you died? Would you, a man, a true believer in the Prophet, whose law you promise to fulfil, be a slave to a Christian, and not strive to shake off the shackle which bound you like a beast to its load? Speak, for you are a man—and a bold one too, or the eye of the hawk has been placed in the head of the dove ;—if *you* would so strive to be free, is it a sin in a Christian to have the feelings of a man ?”

“ Thou hast spoken well,” replied the Moor : “ what you have done, by Allah ! was nobly done ; and you have risked the long, dreary march of the caravan to avoid the Moors of

the north. You have acted wisely ; but you are yet slaves.”

Hammerton, whose ears had greedily caught every sound, at the mention of the word “slaves” felt for his pistol, and half drew it from his belt. The Moor saw the motion of his hand, and coolly said, “Abdallah, is your reason gone ? If I die, who will guide you in this pathless sand ? and would you spill the blood of the man with whom you have eaten salt ? You, too, repeat the instructions of the Koran ; but, being an infidel, you act like a perfidious Jew. I will guide you to the coast, I will show you the waters of the great lake ; but as you have doubted my word, so also I doubt your friendship. To the coast I will see you in safety ; then Allah protect you ! for Hossein will leave you.”

Hammerton had made up his mind not to be led back a slave without trying his skill with the pistols about him. He told Sidi, in English, that he doubted the fidelity of Hossein, and advised her to be on her guard : from that moment

not a word was said. Hossein kept his eyes fixed upon a star; the hours of darkness passed, and the streaks of daylight appeared.

The sun had risen about an hour, when Hossein, looking carefully around him, said, "This way, Abdallah. See you yon shrub? fix the tent close to that: before you have done it, I will be with you."

"Stay, Hossein, stay!" cried Sidi: "you are a chief—you have sworn and repeated your friendship; will you leave a woman, a weak woman, to die in this horrible place?"

"A woman!" said the Moor as he turned his camel towards her: "by Allah, it is a Frangi woman! Fright must have blinded me, or I could have told from your eyes that your heart belonged not to a man. Near this place we have provisions; I know where to find them; I will return with them shortly."

"You have with you the only drop of water," continued Sidi as she stretched out her hands: "you will not leave us, Hossein! I implore you, I pray you, leave us not for a moment!"

“Holy Prophet!” said Hossein with great coolness, “women are all alike,—Arab, Persian, Morocco, Frangi, or Negro; if once they get frightened, they would not believe even in a Turk. You rubbed my head and cooled my parched lips,” he continued as he addressed her; “I owe you the hospitality you have shown me: my word is pledged; before you are ready to eat in shelter from the sun, I will bring more food for you. Waste no more time in words: an Arab or a Trâkânt Moor never speaks falsely; for if I were inclined to deal treacherously, who could avert the blow?”

Hammerton made no remark, but guided his camel towards the bush. Near it was a small sprinkling of scanty grass, and the hungry animals scarcely allowed time for their masters to unlade them before they rushed to the green herbage and ate it. Sidi, fatigued, worn out, excited, was hardly able to stand. The tent was pitched, and both were soon under its shelter. Sidi, weakened by the fatigue, dispirited, wavering, uncertain, burst into tears; and Ham-

merton, who felt his tongue cleave to his clammy mouth, was conscious of his own indifference to life from the total want of power or inclination to afford the least consolation to his friend. Even hope scarcely inspired them, and they viewed each other with feelings of despair.

Some time had elapsed before Hossein returned. He brought with him a great increase of provisions ; the water-skins had not leaked ; and once more confidence was restored to the travellers. Hossein, by far the strongest of the party, acted more as a slave than a master, and by his kind manner restored the spirits of his companions.

“ Allah is merciful !” he began : “ our stores are not discovered ; here is sufficient to carry us within two days of the great water,—there we have more in concealment. We have yet, however, the worst part of the journey to perform : for twenty-five long nights must we pursue our route ; on the morning of the twenty-fifth, Inshallah ! we shall rejoice—that is our hope. Tell me, Abdallah, what reward do you

think is due to a man who preserves the life of another ?”

“ Whatever he can afford : all but to render him a slave is due to his preserver ; his name should be cherished with gratitude until life be extinguished.”

“ ’Tis well, Abdallah. What, think you, Sidi, is the due of him who leaves his own tribe to guide two slaves through the Desert and restore them to liberty ?”

“ All—all, everything,” replied Sidi, “ but life or slavery.”

“ Remember your words,” continued the Moor : “ now eat, and then take your rest.”

With a liberal hand he gave each their allowance of water in a small calabash ; and when the parched and cracked lips of the wanderers had been cooled, and they had drained the bowl of its last drop, they were surprised to see the Moor wash out the calabash and throw away a quantity which to them seemed inestimable. Hossein took less than the rest, and before drinking, carefully turned the bowl so as not to allow his lips to touch the part which

had been profaned by infidels. In silence he ate his food ; and then, as if perfectly secure in the company of the strangers, placed his head upon his saddle, and in two minutes was in a sound slumber.

The example was too good not to be imitated ; and long and sound was the sleep of all three. Hossein awoke his companions, and, in a hurried manner, desired them to strike the tent directly and secure the camels. The order was promptly obeyed, although there appeared no reason why it should be given. It was about three hours after noon—the sun was on the decline,—not an object to cause alarm was visible,—indeed, they appeared alone in the centre of a far-spread lake ; still Hossein became more eager as the preparations were nearer conclusion. “ Drink,” said he as he offered the calabash ; “ this black misfortune I did not anticipate : drink largely, for it may be long before you are again so invited. Now cover each camel’s nose and eyes, and keep close to the ground ; do not attempt to stir, or you will perish. See there !” he said, pointing to a light

streak of a yellowish colour which spread itself in the heavens from south-east to north-east, but which was so far from assuming a formidable appearance, that it looked more like the cheering rainbow.

Hossein kept his eyes fixed upon it, and Hammerton remarked that it looked less distinct than before. At this moment it was a dead calm; the hot breeze, which had blown with scarcely strength enough to move a grain of sand, had perfectly subsided, and the heat became intolerable: the camels turned towards the eastward, stretched out their long necks, and exhibited signs of impatience; they were made to lie down, their heads pointed to the westward. Hammerton, who was suspicious of every movement of the Moor, became alarmed at the fear which manifested itself in the countenance of their guide, and the remark he made concerning the streak becoming less distinct was answered thus:—

“It is the sand carried up in the clouds which darkens the view. Allah! Allah! but its force must be tremendous! When it comes,

lie down close—close, and let its violence blow over you ; keep your hand before your mouth and nostrils, and do not lift your heads until I call.”

A low murmuring sound was heard approaching, and the wind was plainly audible above as it skimmed over them : a dark cloud appeared approaching like a pall to cover them. No retreat or flight could save them : to the north two or three pillars moving with great rapidity, and whirling round, were stalking along ; whilst to the southward the whole desert appeared tossed into the air. The sand was borne aloft, and a current of wind carried it over the heads of the travellers : being there released from the viewless barrier of the wind, it fell like a slight shower of rain. Nearer and nearer the centre seemed to approach ; the whirlwinds which occasioned the spiral columns of sand gradually became closer ; when Sidi seized the hand of Hammerton, and throwing herself on her knees, offered a wild ejaculation to Heaven and sank upon the ground. Hammerton kept his eye upon the forthcoming danger ;

alarmed, but not daunted, he stood as if he could oppose himself to the fury of the elements and brave their force ;—whilst the Moor, whose eager glance swept the horizon from north to south, had alarm and apprehension strongly depicted on his countenance.

“ Down ! down ! ” he cried ; and scarcely had Hammerton obeyed the injunction, when the sand was driven over him with fearful rapidity : that which supported him seemed sapped from beneath him. A difficulty of respiration succeeded, and, faint and weak, he kept his hand over his nostrils and mouth gasping for breath, at each respiration feeling all the horrors of suffocation. The wind roared over the prostrate travellers, and the sand grated on the ear as it was propelled with fearful violence along. At last came one tremendous burst, and then all was calm again. The sand fell to the ground,—the air became clear ; and at Hossein’s call, Hammerton endeavoured to rise : he was so weakened, however, by overpowering lassitude, that he was scarcely able to stand ; giddiness seized him, and he sank down

again. In the mean time, the Moor released the camels, and took the coverings from their eyes : his prudent foresight had saved them ; and the fabulous story of these sagacious animals burying their heads in the sand to avoid the storm was at once confuted by the knowledge of the fact, that they bury their noses to avoid the sand, which drives them to madness if propelled with force into their large nostrils and eyes.

“ Awake ! woman,” said Hossein as he advanced towards Sidi and took her in his arms. As he lifted her, the head fell back, and the lifeless form of the unfortunate girl was supported by the Moor. She was dead !—not the slightest pulsation was evident to give the smallest hope, and with a kind of superstitious dread occasioned by touching a dead infidel, Hossein rather dropped than laid her on the ground.

The announcement of this calamity soon roused Hammerton into exertion : he flung himself over the dead body of his departed companion, rubbed her heart ; but all was still—still as the desert

around him ! For some time he remained in perfect despair : the only human being to whom of late years he had been in the least attached, the object for which he had risked his life, was now a corpse by his side, and he a wanderer in the desert, with no companion but a Moor,—and a Moor of that tribe notorious for their perfidy. He sat by the dead in mute despair, unable to rouse into action that spirit which alone could extricate him from his perilous situation.

“ Why weeps my son ? ” said Hossein as he placed his hand upon Hammerton’s shoulder. “ Allah is great ! and his will must be done : it was her destiny, and who could avert it ? Why weeps my son ?—when the treasure is gone, of what avail is counting the gold in imagination ? This is no time for weakness or useless excitement : see how the hot win which killed her has reduced us !—look ! the water-skins are dried and cracked as if they had been placed in the oven ; not a drop remains, and we have a long, long journey before we reach a well. I dare not return whence we

came, for before this time the enemy is there. Arise, Abdallah ! and bow to the fate you cannot avoid. If we are to succeed in our endeavours, our destiny will guide us ; if not, Allah is merciful !—Arise, and let us bury the dead !”

Hammerton at length roused himself, and finding that it was useless to waste the precious moments which could not recall the dead to life, with his hands scratched a grave deep enough for the body : in this he was assisted by Hossein, who manifested some little religious awe as he flung the sand aside and worked in silence.

“ Are there any beasts of prey to disturb my poor companion’s body when we are gone ?” asked Hammerton.

“ They are too sagacious to come thus far : but I have known large birds of the Desert soar over a spot far from vegetation. They follow caravans, and pounce upon the carrion when it falls,—but here she may lie in security.”

They took the corpse and placed it in its narrow grave. But before it was hid for ever from view, Hammerton knelt down and prayed ;

even the Moor turned his face towards the temple, and kneeling down thrice, bowed his head to the ground: he then covered his face with his hands, muttered aloud some verses of the Koran, and remained in that position until Hammerton arose and threw the sand over his unfortunate companion.

“ 'Tis done,” he said; “ our last duties to humanity are performed. Death levels us all; the Padishah and the infidel must both cease to breathe; and you, Hossein, surely are not so warped by your faith as to deny that poor girl a place in heaven.”

“ Allah is great !” replied Hossein; “ the thing is possible.—Now to the camels. We must go on by night and by day until we reach the well: there is not a drop of water left; and as neither could travel to the well without it, we must borrow a little from our neighbour here.”

So saying, he took the camel which Sidi had ridden, and removing all the useful articles to his own beast, desired Hammerton to advance with the two animals whilst he killed the third and extracted the water. There was no alter-

native,—either the camel or themselves must have perished.

The Moors of the Desert are expert in the butcher's trade: the docile animal stretched his throat as directed, and was soon relieved from the toils of existence. Hossein knew the delicate anatomy well, and with surprising quickness extracted the stomach which contained the water. This he placed entire in the skins, and having reloaded his camel, and cut sufficient flesh for food from the one sacrificed, mounted his beast, and the lonely pair proceeded.

“ I owe you much,” said Hammerton while they continued their journey; “ and I swear by Allah and by my own God, that I will amply repay you: once return me to my country, and there I will be a more profitable slave to you than if sold into captivity here. I have gold—take it: I would rather be rid of the useless dross than weary my camel by its weight. Here are jewels—take them all. You are my only hope; and this is a trifle to the remunera-

tion I will cause to be forwarded to you, if my father lives."

"You have done well, Abdallah!" replied Hossein: "here gold is an encumbrance, and to you at any rate it would be useless; the jewels are rare and valuable; you have sworn a good oath: hear me.—You have by this offer of gold eradicated the suspicions I entertained against you: once more you are my friend; I will be true to you, and trust you to remit me a ransom in the manner I shall hereafter relate: your life is safe now. I knew that you possessed this gold: we Moors have spies where few would suspect it. Had you continued with the caravan, you would have been robbed, and perhaps murdered. The Moorish servant, in his escape to warn his comrades of your unexpected delay at the wells, met me: it was fortunate, for I wanted a messenger. You, I knew, I could manage: I leave the rest of the caravan to them."

CHAPTER X.

Adventures in the Desert.

THE travellers proceeded on their exhausting journey; Hammerton revolving in his mind the adventures of the past, and his hopes for the future. Since the death of his late companion in slavery, all seemed to have changed: the journey, the horrible sameness of which was more painful almost than the fatigue, was performed without any particular misfortunes. As the travellers approached the sea, the appearance of the Desert now began to alter,—the sand was found to be composed partly of sea-shells, bearing evidence that this great and gloomy desert had once been covered with water.

On remarking this change to his companion, Hossein replied: “ We have a tradition amongst

us, that, many moons past, the waters of the great lake, to which we cannot see a termination, once washed over this desert ; but this was even before the blessed Prophet rode the miraculous camel. Amongst us who live here at war with the world these stories pass from father to son,—it is our only history, for when we go to the coast or towns for intelligence of caravans, we never learn to read those books which your countrymen the infidels send over to instruct us, as they say. We watch the starting of the caravan, to get one of our tribe a friend of the caravan bashi, and then we reap our harvest in the desert, where escape is impossible.”

“ But some caravans,” remarked Hammer-ton, “ arrive in safety to their place of destination ?”

“ True,” replied Hossein ; “ but they have paid handsomely for our protection : then we escort them ; and our words once pledged for their security, we would die rather than rob them !”

“ The caravan I came with,” resumed Ham-merton, “ was that under your protection ?”

“No,” replied Hossein. “The ass of a bashi, who, under the advice of the devil, refused to give the trifle we required, has long since paid it eight times over, before he reached his journey’s end : I warrant he and his cargo have changed hands. Those who refuse to give up their property are slain. We have with us men respectable from connexion, who sell our plunder at Timbuctoo ; and we therefore allow the poor devils who believe their property to be secure, all the trouble of the transport ; but when they are nearly at their journey’s end, we save them all further anxiety, and manage the rest ourselves.”

“And then,” interrupted Hammerton, “return home.”

“We have no home but our tents. No : we share the plunder ; go into some town, revel in the luxuries of life, until the means of satisfying our wishes are exhausted ; then we mount our camels again, join our tribes, and soon replenish our stock. But, asses that we are ! worse than the father of all fools are we ! we now quarrel amongst ourselves. Some drunken

owls stole some women from our neighbouring tribe, and blood once spilt is never dried up even by the desert. My scattered people," added he, "will meet me not far from our next resting-place. Fear not — my word is pledged; you shall be taken in safety to the great water."

The whole scenery now began to assume a different appearance. For twenty-five days had the travellers toiled over the sand, but now the sight was gladdened by occasional patches of verdure; the camels stepped out more cheerfully; birds were also seen whirling about aloft, and the travellers seemed, as it were, to be returning from the dead to the living. As they advanced further on, trees were seen in the distance; some hills reared their heads above the dismal plain; animated Nature again assumed her dominion, and the scene appeared by contrast like a garden.

The spirits of Hammerton rose as he approached this termination of his journey; and those of Hossein in proportion seemed to droop. "You rejoice," said, he "at this change: my home

is far behind me. It is true that I shall enjoy myself in the towns, for I shall return by Morocco to El-Harib, thence again over the sands ; but I shall have no companion. I have much to do to repair the evil which has come upon me ; and yet, if man's heart is not like the stone dropped into the water, over which the endless sea runs its uninterrupted course, burying it for ever beneath its waves, you will occasionally think of her who lies now beneath the sand of our desert ; and even when far away, you will remember Hossein the Moor, who assisted at her burial.—Ah ! yonder is a man—one of my tribe most likely. Before we approach him, let us listen.—Our tribe will demand a heavy ransom for your life. I know you have given all you have. How will you silence these men, who consider infidels as marketable commodities, upon whom they put a price ? what shall I say to quiet them ?”

“ I will pay any sum of money I can command,” answered Hammerton, not very much pleased with the manner this unexpected com-

munication was made, "into the hands of any agent you may appoint."

"'Tis well said, Abdallah; but when the bird has escaped from the fowler's snare, who shall ensure its return?"

"You know well, Hossein, that I have no money. If you can believe in me, I will be as true to my word as an Arab. Of what use would my carcass be to you and yours? for if I am returned to slavery, I will destroy the hope of reward by terminating my own existence."

"Our dogs which bark, Abdallah, seldom bite," remarked Hossein; "it is the silent, surly cur who rushes undismayed upon danger. But my word is pledged: to you I trust to remit me three thousand dollars, to Israel Ben Achmet at Algiers. Say it is for Hossein, the Moor of El-Harib. Promise."

"I do."

"Swear by your Prophet!"

"I swear!"

"It is enough."

By this time the stranger had approached. It

was, as Hossein had conjectured, one of the expected tribe. He brought great intelligence of plundered caravans, of retreating enemies, and of prosperous events. "But," said he, "two prizes have escaped us. Berzroom has lost two slaves : one, a woman of great beauty ; the other, a willing lad, who worked hard. Perhaps the old Turk might have borne the loss of both of these without much repining, had not his favourite slave Abdallah been killed, and a dromedary of great worth stolen. He has offered ten thousand dollars for both, or five thousand for either slave returned to him. All the malice of revenge—every cruelty that man has invented to torture his fellow man, he vows shall be used, until the skin, wasting away by slow degrees, shall leave his victim a moving skeleton to die of lingering starvation. They would be great prizes for us, Hossein ; but they have eluded our vigilance."

"How long is it since these slaves escaped?" asked Hossein.

"It is now forty-two days. Our men have been active ; and some report has reached us

that they followed the caravan to Timbuctoo. If so, they may yet be ours; for minute descriptions have been given of them; the reward and known integrity of the old Turk have set us all on the alert. Such a prize would give us all the blessings of a repose in the towns.”

Hossein seemed little to heed the garrulity of his comrade. He had one of the prizes in his power; and although his word was pledged, yet he was not quite so honourable in his heart as at once to forego the bait: the other was dead, still he could find the bones. He bent his head forward and seemed wrapt in thought; whilst Hammerton, who had paid the greatest attention to this unwelcome communication, was busy planning some mode of escape—even by a murder.

His pistols were still about him; the flints not likely to forego the spark—the powder dry. What was now to hinder his despatching both his friend Hossein and his avowed enemy? He was evidently not far from his journey's end: there was a freshness in the air unknown to the desert; and not far on their

right some curling smoke rose, and on the left the trees seemed all to have an inclination one way.

This last circumstance was to Hammerton's mind decisive that the sea was not far distant. Yet to murder the man who had assisted to bury his companion—who had led him through a desert where no stranger could have extricated himself—who had provided him with provisions, slept under the same tent, drunk from the same bowl, and eaten of the same salt, was impossible! and Hammerton would sooner have died than have taken his companion's life:—to take the life of one who had been, moreover, his only companion in danger, who had sworn to release him, and who had appeared so open and so upright, was a thought not for an instant to be encouraged by such a man as Hammerton.

Very different were the workings of Hossein's mind. His life was a life of rapine and murder,—he was an outlaw—a general vulture upon society—one who heeded not the screams or entreaties of the innocent. He was the priva-

teer and the pirate of the Desert: to him all were enemies who crossed his seas, and the camels, (the ships of the deserts) their cargoes and their crews, were all prizes. He reflected upon the uncertainty of the ransom on the one hand, the certainty on the other,—for he would have repaid himself had the Turk proved false to his word; the danger he ran with his own tribe; the ease by which this large sum of money would be made, and the folly of being bound by an oath when his hand had not scrupled at a murder; and yet Hossein had contracted a friendship for his companion, and such a friendship as adversity alone can create. Abdallah had reposed a trust in him; had given up, unsolicited, all his money; had fed with him, worked with him, and suffered with him: it was odd for a Moor, but a sensation of mercy passed over him.

Hossein, after having duly considered the matter, called the stranger, and kept up in a low voice an earnest conversation with him, during which Hammerton was occasionally watched by the new-comer. Whenever their eyes met, there was a kind of doubt upon the features of

the Moor, and a careless disregard on the other. That he was condemned Hammerton had no doubt ; and yet he was confident that had Hossein intended treachery, he would have shown his intention long since.

This consideration convinced him that the sacred pledge of the salt would not be violated ; although he well knew that these pirates frequently shuffle out of an oath, and think the deceit laudable.

Hammerton had been the football of Fortune from the day he entered the navy to the present time, and had encountered little else but a succession of troubles and privations. Still he clung to life with all the ardour of a more fortunate man. He had now surmounted every peril by which he had been surrounded—had gained the coast, and was firmly resolved to leave his bones to whiten on the shore, or to try his old enemy, the sea, to restore him to his home.

It was now nearly noon : the heat was oppressive, and the wearied camels walked with difficulty. Hossein proposed a halt : the camels were as usual allowed to browse ; the tent was

fixed, and all seemed conducted with the usual confidence. The stranger ate from his own store ; whilst Hossein and Abdallah shared the little which was left.

It was the customary habit immediately after the meal to retire to rest : but Hammerton was too much on his guard to do this. Hossein, as usual, threw himself down, and was soon asleep ; but the stranger remained awake, and never took his eyes from Hammerton. He answered no questions, but in a surly, dogged, manner examined his arms, then lighted his pipe, and smoked in silence. Hammerton thought the first example one very proper to be followed, and he likewise looked to his arms, which he found to be in good order. By way of keeping on the alert and awake, although fatigue nearly weighed his eyelids down, he rubbed his scimitar until the blade was as reflective as a looking-glass : at last he could no longer struggle against nature, and he fell into a profound slumber.

It was not till past noon that he awoke. The stranger was in the same position, smok-

ing. Hossein still slumbered, and everything around him remained untouched. This disarmed Hammerton of any suspicions he might have entertained. The camels were now again prepared, and for the last time the party set forward. There came a freshness in the breeze as the sun went down; the night was cloudy, and occasionally squally; and Hammerton felt assured that this peculiar freshness of the air was caused by its having been blown over the ocean, and that on the morrow his eyes would be gladdened by the sight of the Lake of Large Waters, under which denomination the Trâkânt Moors call the sea. There seemed no particular communication between the parties: Hossein went, as usual, first; Hammerton second, and the stranger third. Very few words were exchanged; but those few were highly gratifying to Hammerton.

“To-morrow, Abdallah,” Hossein said, “you will see the large lake, and you will be freed from the necessity of using a tent by the day after. There is a small town not far from the cape, to which my friend will direct you. At

dawn I shall leave you, after I have fulfilled my promise and pointed out to you the waters. On your part, you will not forget your pledge. We may meet again, or destiny may separate us for ever. 'I shall not forget poor Sidi who lies under the sand ; nor should you blot from memory the Moor who conducted you across the pathless desert. My people are not far, and I must join them. Have you anything to say, to offer, to give, or request, before we part ?'

" I have," replied Hammerton : " to repeat my gratitude ; to offer you all that a poor wanderer can offer—my prayers for your safety. The tent which has shaded us is yours, my camel yours—everything I possess is yours. One favour only I would request :—if I reach this village which you say is so near, I must enter it a beggar ; I have not one piece of money of the smallest value ; should I go into the town a mendicant, I should be compelled from necessity to work, or become a slave. I ask just sufficient to keep me for three days ; by that time my strength may be partially recruited, and I may be enabled to bear more fatigue."

“Here is money,” replied Hossein; “you need not much:” and he gave back to Hammerton some coin with the air of a man who did not feel inclined to do a generous action.

At daylight Hammerton gave a shout of joy: before him lay the sea, and the dark clouds which settled on the horizon were to him perhaps the most glorious sight of his life. When he saw the curling waves foaming as they broke upon the shore, he tried to urge his camel to a quicker walk, that he might meet the breakers upon the beach, and feel it was no deception—no mirage of the Desert—by plunging into it. Powerful indeed were the emotions this cheerful sight produced. All his past troubles and anxieties were forgotten: he looked no longer upon the perils he had encountered,—he looked forward only with hope.

“My task is done,” said Hossein,—“my pledge is redeemed. There are the waters of the great lake: there,” said he, pointing a little to the right, “is the village you seek. Farewell! I leave you this friend of mine as your companion: he will not desert you. Farewell!”

“Nay, stop,” said Hammerton: “one word before we part. You will believe me sincere in my promises; inquire at Algiers within four months of this day. You will not deny me this favour: accept this ring—it belonged to Sidi. When we laid her in the grave, I took this from her finger and concealed it: it is all I have at this moment in the world; I ask you to take it as a pledge of friendship and of esteem.”

Hossein took it without saying a word, and bowing with a graceful Oriental bend, he turned his camel to the north-eastward, and desiring Hammerton to follow his destiny, departed.

There was in Hossein's manner something which startled the suspicions of Hammerton;—there was a coolness and condescension, which ill accorded with their previous friendship. Neither did Hammerton much admire his guard and companion; he would rather have entered the town by himself, and he saw no necessity for burthening the stranger with his company. However, he concluded it would be as well to allow him to keep near him until Hossein was far removed, and with this intention he did not

attempt to swerve from the course he was pursuing.

Well did Hammerton know the treachery of these people, notwithstanding their religious superstition in regard to the violation of any law of the Koran. He saw in Hossein's departure a subterfuge ; he had conducted him to the spot, but he had left a man to watch him,—one who had eaten by himself, one who had proclaimed the bounty offered for his capture. Again an idea presented itself to Hammerton : the terms of the reward were for his capture alive, that lingering torture might glut the revenge of the old Turk ; for his carcass was not worth the powder requisite to kill it, and every farthing had been given to Hossein, with the exception of about two dollars which were returned to him. With this conviction, Hammerton's mind became more composed ; he thought that singly opposed to this man, he himself being armed, he would deserve to lose his life if he could not protect it. But it was evident Hossein had men within reach, and Hammerton felt he might be led back to El-Harib

under the orders of Hossein, whilst the perfidious Moor would only appear when the reward was to be paid.

Whilst he was busied in turning over these thoughts in his mind, the day broke, and there at anchor off the town lay a large ship. Hammerton, although he had been so long a stranger to his profession, knew her at the first glance to be too large for a merchant ship. The vessels employed in the slave-trade, and which are those which frequent the coast further to the southward, are generally low, sneaking vessels, built for fast sailing; this looked like a frigate: to whatever country she belonged, she was for him a sure refuge. The vessel was at anchor a little to the southward of the town, and in order to get down upon the beach so as to advance near to her, it became requisite to steer the ship of the Desert more to the westward. Without consulting his companion, Hammerton altered the direction of his course. No sooner had he done so, than his careful friend reminded him that he was taking a circuitous route.

“ I know it,” said Hammerton. “ I am going along the beach to the village.”

“ Pardon me,” said the Moor as he advanced ; “ I must see you in safety. This is the way I intend to go ;” and suiting the action to the word, he caught hold of the rope which served as a bridle, and giving it a sudden jerk, made the camel resume its former course. Hammerton did not appear to heed this insult, but turned round to assure himself that Hossein was too far away to render any assistance. As he was still visible, he remarked to the Moor,

“ Friend, you are too kind, and I fear I trouble you with my company.”

“ Not in the least,” replied the surly dog ; “ I shall have plenty of that before we part, so we may as well get used to it : make your beast walk faster.”

Hammerton took no notice of this remark. His eyes were fixed upon the ship, the side of which showed the ports of a frigate. He then carefully surveyed the coast. Along the shore, the high sea broke with furious impetuosity—

wave after wave came surging and breaking ; whilst the noise heard far off of the reflux of the sea convinced Hammerton that any escape from that part was impossible : his own element had tossed up an insuperable barrier against him. Continuing his search with a careful eye, he discovered, nearly in a line with the ship, a small part of the coast which seemed free from the breakers. Although nearly in a semicircle outside, there was a bar or sandbank over which the water foamed ; the centre part was open and afforded an inlet for boats. This, therefore, was the place which he was resolved to gain, and there by signs and signals to draw the attention of those on board the ship.

The clouds which had lowered over the horizon cleared away as the day advanced ; a light breeze blew from the land, and the frigate was riding with her head to the town. It was scarcely daylight,—at least, not broad day ; the sun had not risen ; and although Hossein was no longer visible, he might have been near enough to render assistance. Now came the trial,—now came all arguments to Hammerton's

mind in self-justification of the blow he seemed compelled to strike. It was for his liberty—his life; for without the one, the other was not worth retaining. Carefully he ran over the future prospects of the recaptured slave;—slow lingering torture, starvation, bastinado, the life of the brute with the thought of the human being; constant labour to increase the wealth of others, and no recompense for services; to live a slave—to die a dishonoured infidel, and his carcass to be given to the birds of prey, because no one would feel sufficient affection to scratch a grave. On the other hand was restoration to life by the renewal of all social ties;—again to see a cherished sister, to hear tidings of his earliest friends; to mark how Fortune, so adverse to him, had smiled upon others; to live with those he loved: but this great good was to be effected by a cool deliberate murder.

There was no doubt as to the intentions of the Moor; still Hammerton was desirous that the base conduct of the Moor should be made quite manifest before he proceeded to adopt this last cruel necessity. “Am

"I not free at this moment?" said he to himself; "and shall I at the beck or bidding of a Moor alter my determination? What right has this man over me? why am I subject to his restraint?"

The mind weakened by slavery and fearful as to escape, like the thief in the fable, trembles at every voice. "There is no time for delay," thought Hammerton; "I must now act." With this determination, he again directed his camel to the beach: at the same time, and with trembling hand, he drew a pistol from his belt, which he held ready for service.

"More to the right," said the Moor as he perceived the alteration.

Hammerton took no notice.

"Dost hear me, Abdallah?—more to the right!"

Still Hammerton took no notice, but continued to sing the song of encouragement to his camel. The Moor now broke out into a furious strain, which convinced Hammerton that Hossein had not considered himself in honour bound to keep the secret.

“ Dog of a defiled infidel !” said the Moor as he advanced close up, “ dost hear me ? By Allah ! if thou dost not turn that brute towards the town, I will lash thee on its back and scourge thee to make it walk the faster.”

“ Touch but that rope,” said Hammerton, “ and I will send you to your Prophet before you can loosen the lock of hair by which he is to take you to Paradise.”

“ By our holy Prophet !” ejaculated the Moor, “ this would make a Persian laugh !—a slave—an infidel—a defiled dog, to draw a pistol against a Moor ! Are you mad ? or must I get my comrades here to hunt you to the town as they would a jackal ? I tell you, more to the right, or I’ll give a signal which will soon be answered.”

“ Raise but your hand, and you die. Walk on by my side, and you may live long to cut throats in the Desert. Am I your slave, that you order me ? I want you not more than as an escort. I see no danger to alarm me ; and if you are left by Hossein to serve me, do as I bid you.”

The fury of the Moor at the coolness of these remarks was uncontrollable : in a moment he applied a whistle to his mouth, and blew a loud, long, shrill note. The mischief was done, and there was no means of counteracting the effect : to have shot the Moor would not stop the signal too surely given. Both stopped on the instant : the Moor leant over on one side as if to hear the answer ; and Hammerton, tremblingly alive to his situation, heard distinctly the long, shrill note which responded to the whistle of the Moor. He turned his eyes to the ship : there was his only hope of restoration swinging carelessly to the light flaws of wind which, in this country, are seldom steady before the regular breeze is established.

Almost without hope, Hammerton continued to gaze : at length he saw a boat push from the ship and steer for the entrance above mentioned. “ Is there not a chance of escape in that direction ? ” thought Hammerton as he urged his camel forward ; but the jaded animal, in spite of the goadings unmercifully bestowed upon him, refused to quicken its pace. The moment Ham-

merton's eyes were fixed in one direction looking for the appearance of some expected enemy, the next he would turn again towards the boat : but the animal on which he rode still took its measured strides ; nor could the goad of the sharp point of his scimitar, nor the hasty song (the best inducement), make the camel advance the quicker.

The boat was now fast nearing the shore ; it was inside the reef, and in smooth water. The Moor, who perceived the object Hammer-ton had in view, again blew the shrill whistle, but in another note. It was answered nearer than the first. Hammerton turned his eye in the direction of the sound, and saw distinctly turning round a small hillock the forms of one or two men. He now stepped down from his camel and took to his heels, holding in each hand a pistol.

The man who runs for his life runs lustily : in spite of his cramped limbs from the long sitting posture he had so long endured, Hammer-ton soon passed the camel, and increased his distance from the Moor. The latter,

seeing his prey escaping, drew a pistol and took a steady shot at the flying slave. The ball passed through the fleshy part of the leg. Hammerton felt that he was hit; but life was on the die—he heeded not the wound, but ran even faster than before.

The boat had by this time touched the shore; the seamen were employed in preparing the seine to catch some fish. Upon hearing the pistol-shot of the Moor, however, they immediately got ready their fire-arms; whilst, to be in greater security, they jumped into the boat and kept her off on her oars.

In the mean time, the fugitive saw in another direction a quick-footed dromedary advancing to cut off his retreat. It was evident from the long strides of the nimble animal, that he would arrive nearly at the same moment, if not before he could reach the boat. There was therefore but one resource left, and his resolution was instantly taken. As the Moor with his bared scimitar rode furiously at Hammerton, the latter, panting for breath, and nearly overcome with fatigue and pain from his wound, stop-

ped short, took as quiet an aim as was possible to one so hotly pursued, and pulled the trigger. It missed fire ! His hope was now reduced to one pistol ; he took it in the right hand, and as his adversary continued to advance to within three yards, he fired and shot the dromedary. The animal fell with a heavy fall, and the Moor rolled off from her back.

The officer in the boat, who saw the affair, broke through the orders he had received,—which were, on no account to interfere with the natives, but on every occasion to endeavour to cultivate their friendship. “ Give way, my lads,” said he, “ and save that poor devil !” The sailors, ever alive to do a generous action, bent their backs to their oars ; the boat skimmed through the smooth water, touched the beach, and in a second was lightened of her crew.

Hammerton saw his countrymen advancing to his rescue : but although he felt the fainting weakness which the loss of blood occasioned, his heart still bore him up manfully. He was within a hundred yards of his friends ; the Moors pursued him closely — he could

almost hear them panting. At this moment it occurred to him to try the pistol which had missed fire, and which he retained in his hand, although he had thrown away the other. The cartridges were in his belt: he succeeded in re-priming the pistol. He felt, however, he could not reach his friends before he should be overtaken. With the despair of the hunted stag, which stands at bay when the chase is done and the greedy fangs of the dogs are shining in its sight, Hammerton turned to meet his foes. Their numbers had now increased; there were seven or eight in sight, but only one near enough to interrupt him. This was the Moor who had accompanied him. With a glow of satisfaction on his countenance as he saw the slave almost within his grasp and unable to move, the Moor sprang lightly forward to secure him. Hammerton now made a last effort,—he levelled his pistol, and the pursuer fell to the ground a corpse as Hammerton dropped down and almost fainted from fatigue and loss of blood.

It was now a race between the seamen and the Moors, each striving to arrive at the spot

first; and greatly did Hammerton fear that he might not retain sufficient strength to tell them who he was. He heard the officer cheering his men: "Step out, my lads, one and all! There is some foul play here: get between the Moors and the fallen man before you stop.

The cry of the Moors, "Allah il Allah!" was heard from the other side; "the slave will meet his destiny—he is ours!"

At this moment the officer jumped across the fallen body of Hammerton, and heard distinctly the last words he uttered before he fainted, "Save me!—save me! I am an Englishman."

There was now every prospect of a much better fight. The seamen, who heard their officer call out, "By heavens! he is an Englishman!" drew up in a line brandishing their stretchers; whilst four marines, whom prudent foresight had placed in the boat lest some surprise should take place, stood with their muskets ready and pointed. This checked the advance of the foremost Moors, who waited for a reinforcement.

The time was not lost by the officer, who made three of his men take up the wounded man and convey him towards the boat, he himself with the marines retreating at the same time.

The signal-man, who had been desired to watch the boat from the frigate, had witnessed by means of his glass the whole affair: the officer of the watch had reported it to the captain; the boats were hoisted out, manned, and armed; and as the lieutenant who commanded on shore began to be apprehensive of the result,—for the Moors like bees began to swarm, and to gain upon him so much that he was fearful of his own retreat,—a long gun from the frigate was fired. The seamen, who turned to see the signal, which was the recall flag, saw also the coming assistance. The Moors pressed forward to regain their lost prize; the seamen cheerfully carried the body, which again manifested some signs of returning life; the marines retreated with their faces to the approaching swarm, and with steady determination seemed resolved to protect the wretched man they had contributed to rescue.

The increased numbers of the Moors had been seen from the ship: the boats neared the shore; and at the instant the parties reached the beach, and Hammerton was placed in the stern sheets, the Moors prepared their long spears. The seamen and marines of the *Arethusa* now landed to assist their shipmates, and the steady fronts thus presented to them scared away the pirates of the Desert, who, with a wild cry, tossed up their spears, and turned round, as the boats returned to their ship and placed Hammerton in security.

CHAPTER X.

A Funeral and a Wedding.

THE Arethusa entered Malta with her prize towing astern. At this time there were many English men-of-war in the harbour, and long and loud were the cheers which welcomed the victorious frigate to the anchorage. Over the tricoloured flag, which previous to the action waved in all its pride from the peak of the Didon, was hoisted the union-jack, which Weazel had stuck on a boat-hook; it was almost cut to pieces by musketry, whilst through the white part of the French ensign two round-shot had passed. The welcome was returned by the crew of the Arethusa as she passed slowly and silently between Valetta and Bona-

parte's Bay; and a simultaneous cheer of all the shipping resounded along the harbour as the anchors of both frigates were let go at the entrance of Dock-yard creek.

The boats of the Maltese, laden with oranges, figs, sausages, bread, garlic, melons, and other luxuries to sailors, crowded alongside, and excited the curiosity of the French officers, who, in defiance of all English naval discipline, (but uninterrupted from their situation,) peeped through the ports. The uniform was quickly recognised by those who had so long groaned under the yoke of France, and who had been compelled, in order to save their own lives, to sacrifice everything they possessed. The hatred—the inextinguishable hatred of the Maltese broke out in their hissings and revilings: they called them by all those opprobrious epithets of which the mixed character of the Maltese language is capable, and all attempts on the part of Murray to drive away these screaming jackdaws, who having found others to hunt the prey were now ready to devour it, were unavailing.

There was an admiral in the harbour ; and those alone can estimate the feelings of Murray who have experienced the gratification of reporting to their senior officer the result of a contest such as that already described. The interviews which successful enterprise entails upon the fortunate, and which are seldom inflicted upon the miserable, were soon over ; and Murray, whose heart retained a strong affection for Weazel, resolved to bury him with even more honour than was due to his rank.

Of all the killed in that action, Weazel alone had been reserved for a burial on shore. The seamen, sewed up in hammocks, were consigned to the element on which they had so long served. Some, it is true, were thrown overboard during the action ; but those who lingered until victory was proclaimed, were buried with all the impressive honours of the service. Murray, sensible that nothing touches the sailor more deeply than the respect paid to a departed messmate, took care on this occasion that no circumstance should be omitted which could add to the ceremony. The

bodies of the seamen were carried round the quarter-deck and forecastle, preceded by the band playing the 104th psalm, and followed by the marines with arms reversed, Captain Murray and his officers bringing up the rear. They were consigned to the deep four at a time, two placed upon one grating, and two upon another, the gratings being placed upon both gangways. Captain Murray read the service, and read it impressively: the mess-mates of the killed stood on each side of the gratings, their eyes resting upon the flag under which reposed for ever the bodies of their former friends and companions. When the words were read, "We therefore commit their bodies to the deep," the gratings were launched over the side, and the dead were consigned to their watery graves; the marines fired a volley, the gunner gave a long deep sigh and uttered "Amen! amen!" and the water rolled over those who before were borne upon it, and who were the pride of the noble frigate which had now given them up.

"It's an awful thing to die!" said the gun-

ner, as he put on his hat when the ceremony was over; “and it is no use expending powder over the body, as if they wished to salute a strange ship fitted foreign. For my own part, I should rather like to go quietly, or be bundled overboard during the fight.”

“Ay, ay!” said the boatswain; “I understand all about it. You think, if you can get launched overboard during the confusion, that you will get up to heaven before the devil knows you are dead.”

“Shocking! shocking!” said the gunner as he ran down to his cabin and shut his door.

On the day that Weazel was buried, almost every one in the ship requested they might go on shore and see the last of their favourite—the one who was always foremost in any amusement or in any danger—who was generous, liberal, and humane—who lived like a midshipman, and who died like a hero. To the request of the ship’s company Captain Murray gave an answer in the affirmative; and the streets of Valetta never witnessed, as the procession went slowly along the Strada Reale, to

the Florian gate, more propriety of conduct, more real regret, in a funeral parade, than in the downcast looks of the seamen as they slowly followed their favourite to his last resting-place. They laid him near the entrance to the town, on a rising ground overlooking the quarantine harbour, then not used for that purpose, and little frequented by vessels; and when the marines had fired their three volleys and the ceremony was over, many of the old weather-beaten tars took a handful of dirt, and threw it into the grave, saying, "When the hands are turned up to muster aloft, poor fellow! you will answer your call like a seaman."

"He never did any harm to any one but himself," said the gunner: "he was very fond of the liquor-case, and I make no doubt—"

"—That he will avoid bad spirits for the future," interrupted the boatswain. "Come along, Pounce, and let's drink him a safe voyage to the Great Harbour."

"Let us kneel down," replied the gunner, "and pray for him: let us sing a good psalm."

“ No ! no ! ” said the boatswain : “ he never liked that music ; but he was very fond of—

“ ‘ Here a sheer hulk lies poor Tom Bowling : ’
and if you will just step into this rosolio shop, I’ll give it you loud enough for Weazel to hear it.”

“ Come along on board to our duties,” said the gunner. “ We have done for him all we can do ; he is gone, and now cannot repent. He was hurried from us doing his duty to his country, but not to his—”

“ Avaust heaving there, Pounce ! He could not attend to his duty because he was wounded, or he was not the chap to lie down on a chest in the steerage when his shipmates were blazing away on deck. Don’t you take the poor fellow’s character away, Pounce ; it’s unchristian-like — very, Pounce,—that’s what it is ! I wonder that you, who are always turning up your eyes like a dying duck’s in thunder, should say such a thing : but he can’t hear it now, so you lose your labour.”

The Arethusa required much repair after the injury she had sustained : she had many shot

between wind and water, her lower masts were wounded, her sides riddled. There were no docks at Malta, nor could the dock-yard supply lower masts ; it was therefore decided that she should proceed to England. Accordingly, after a week's delay, she, with her prize in company, weighed her anchors and made sail. She shortly afterwards arrived safely in Portsmouth, entered the harbour, was dismantled, the crew hulked, and the ship taken into dock.

In those stirring times, the activity displayed in the dock-yards was truly wonderful ; nor were the seamen behind the shore-going labourers in diligence. The vessel without a mast might be seen launched afresh, as it were, at daylight in the morning ; by sunset she might be seen in a forward state of equipment ; and the following day, her top-gallant yards might be crossed, her guns and stores on board, and within a few hours of a proper efficiency to go to sea. No captain lingered in harbour ; there was a stirring spirit in the Navy of England unknown to any other nation. The despatch with which vessels were

docked and refitted was truly wonderful: nor was it at all an extraordinary event to see a frigate at anchor at Spithead on the Monday morning, docked, repaired, refitted, re-stored, and standing out of St. Helen's on the Saturday following in a perfect state of efficiency.

On this occasion, it must be confessed that Murray was not quite so eager to go to sea as he was on his first appointment, when he sailed away with old Jonathan Corncob. He applied for a week's leave, which was granted; but the Admiralty were very anxious to employ actively the young captain who had already given such an earnest of future greatness: the orders to the port-admiral were to hasten the refitting of the *Arethusa*, and Murray found that he was very likely to be married one day, and at sea the next.

He found his father in the full enjoyment of health: the adopted child was prepared to become his daughter-in-law—the correspondence between Murray and Amelia which had been begun at Gibraltar, had ripened into a regular return of love-letters; and Murray, in the pride

of the moment, when his greatest hope had been realised in the capture of the *Didon*, had offered his hand in the letter he had written detailing that event. On his arrival at Portsmouth this offer had been repeated. Amelia, although somewhat startled at the necessity for so sudden a celebration of the ceremony, frankly consented, without displaying any of those affected airs in which young ladies sometimes think it becoming on such occasions to indulge.

We have known in the naval service a captain receive his sailing orders as he came out of the church; nay, before he had read his destination, which would sever him from her he had just married thousands of miles, his frigate was under weigh in obedience from the flag-ship, and the gallant captain had no time even to give his bride a parting kiss: she was carried to the hotel, and the bridegroom walked off to his boat—was on board his ship, and by sunset clear of St. Helen's, standing down Channel, to shape a course, when he had cleared it, which would forward the frigate to the Cape of Good Hope.

Walter was married, and thought he might answer with another, when summoned to his ship, “that he was married and could not come.” No one more strenuously opposed this than his wife.

“This is a hard trial, Amelia !” said Walter as he impressed a lover’s kiss on her drooping face.

“I would not for the world mar your prospects in your profession,” said the thoughtful girl, “and must not be selfish. No childish fears shall prompt me to detain you ! If it must be so, go and realise the hopes of your country,—and the blessings of your wife go with you ! Though far absent, my thoughts will be ever near you. Good b’ye ! You shall not see a tear start from my eyes : yet, God knows, I am very—very wretched !” Here nature, however, mastered her resolution, and, in spite of all her heroic determination, she could no longer control her feelings, and burst into tears.

Not unmoved did Sir Hector witness this scene. “I will be a father to her, Walter,”

he began, his voice tremulous with emotion, “and will watch over your treasure.”

“Wherever you go,” said Amelia, at length mastering the sudden outbreak of her feelings, “remember my brother! He may yet live. The uncertainty of his fate is almost worse than the actual knowledge of his loss. Assure me that you will make every effort to learn the truth.—I shall count the hours while you are away,” added she playfully.

“You are my treasure, Amelia! you teach me my duty—the hard duty now—of submission to present circumstances. Cheer my father when I am away—you have ever done that as a friend which you now owe as a daughter. How long I shall be absent, I cannot tell: perhaps I may be attached to the Channel Fleet, and then we can frequently meet at Plymouth; perhaps,” he added with a sigh, “I may be ordered to the East Indies, and then—but we will not anticipate evils. My time grows short, Amelia,—so short indeed, that when I have left you, I shall remember hundreds of things that I wished to

say. Of your brother, however, be assured I will not spare any exertion to learn if he be alive:—God bless you, dearest! Let me take you to my father, and beg of you not to witness my departure. Farewell! when next we meet, we must hope not to be so suddenly separated.”

Walter took leave of his father; the old man in a firm voice bidding him continue to do his duty as nobly as he had done. “We shall soon meet again, I trust. God bless you!”

The married life of Walter can scarcely be said to have commenced,—all was sunshine with him—the little bickerings and jealousies to which the most affectionate are sometimes subject had not reached him; the inflammation of the weekly bills, the torment of disobedient children, the eternal music of the nursery, the vexation of discontented servants, the prying curiosity of neighbours, the requisite attendance of the doctor,—these, and sundry other trifling annoyances of life, (for life would stagnate without annoyance,—we are told that spring

would be but gloomy weather if we had nothing else but spring,) were yet in perspective, and as Walter returned to his ship, he had full time to consider how much one week had altered his situation. But that which gave him the most satisfaction was, that he was none the poorer by his marriage: his wife remained under the roof of his own father—all her personal expenses would come from that liberal hand; and Walter found he had now created a new idol, which he vowed within himself to worship with lover-like idolatry. In the meantime, the wheels rapidly performed their rotatory motion, and he soon found himself on board of the *Arethusa*.

CHAPTER XI.

The Pirate.

THE Arethusa was soon ready for sea ; and Walter, once separated from his young wife, felt more anxious than ever to be actively employed. His wish was soon gratified : ten days from the time the frigate had entered the harbour, she was standing off and on at Spithead, waiting for her captain. The main-top-sail was filled, the ship heeled over to the breeze, and his Majesty had another efficient frigate ready to meet an adversary. She was directed to join the Channel Fleet ; and in the latter part of 1807, she was one of the frigates employed in the blockade of the Rochefort squadron.

A new era was about to break upon the French Navy. Napoleon, notwithstanding the destruction of his fleet at Trafalgar, had, in the space of two years, increased his shattered navy to the number of eighty sail-of-the-line; twenty more sail-of-the-line were ordered to be built, some at Antwerp and Brest, and others at Toulon and L'Orient. Another Trafalgar might reasonably be expected, and the English Navy rejoiced at this growing fleet, which might again come in contact with the fleets of Great Britain, and offer the prospect of another victory to another Nelson.

Seven sail-of-the-line, under Sir Richard Strachan, formed the blockading squadron off Rochefort. To this squadron, as we have said, the *Arethusa* was attached, and was, owing to the necessity which obliged Sir Richard to put to sea in order to meet the provision-ships, which had been ordered to rendezvous some ten or twelve leagues south-west of Roche Bonne, the only ship which witnessed the escape of Rear-Admiral Allemand from the roadstead of Isle d'Aix.

After apprising the English admiral of this event, the *Arethusa* was directed to cruise in the Bay of Biscay; but although Captain Murray was vigilant and active, yet no opportunity offered for any signal manifestation of daring, or gave an opening for any enterprise beyond the occasional capture of some merchant-ships.

In 1809, the *Arethusa* formed one of the fleet destined for the expedition to the Scheldt; between which interval of time Captain Murray had not unfrequently put into Plymouth, and had been able occasionally to visit his wife and his father: and Sir Hector saw almost his last wish gratified, when a son was born, and the inheritance of the title insured.

After the affair in the Scheldt, Captain Murray was two years afterwards directed to accompany the outward-bound India fleet as far as Teneriffe. He was then to visit several parts of the coast of Africa, and to return to England at the expiration of six months.

He had parted company from his charge, and altered his course towards the Cape de

Verd Islands, intending to touch at St. Jago, and had run some degrees to the southward, when a sail was reported ahead. She was felucca-rigged; and as this kind of vessel is generally found in the Mediterranean, some suspicion was excited—more especially as she altered her course directly she made out the frigate, and carried, considering the freshness of the breeze, a great quantity of canvass.

Captain Murray's orders were to search the sea between Teneriffe and the coast, for a piratical vessel, the crew of which had committed unparalleled atrocities. The pirate had effected numerous hair-breadth escapes from the English cruisers, and had struck terror into the hearts of all the captains of merchantmen, whose memories were well stored with the cruelties committed by the low, black, sneaking craft, very properly named *Il Diavolo*: some called her by the Spanish name of *Diablero*, some christened her an English Devil: but no vessel sank from leaks or seas—no vessel was dismasted or disabled—no wreck floated, the crew of which had trusted to either

rafts or boats, but the Devil had the honour of the deed. The snowball accumulates as it rolls, and deeds of cruelty are added by the timid and the easy of belief, to swell the catalogue of crime against the marauders of the seas. The felucca, however, manifested no wish to be overhauled, and kept under all the sail she could carry, nearly preserving her distance from the Arethusa.

About sunset the chase hauled up more to the eastward, standing towards the coast in the direction of Cape Blanco; and it was the opinion of some on board the frigate, that if she once gained the coast, her capture would be certain, for on that part to which she was steering there are no regular harbours: others, on the contrary, expressed their conviction, that if she got into the baffling winds near the coast, she would be enabled to keep closer in-shore than the Arethusa, and thereby take those light gusts of wind which so frequently come after sunset, designated as the land-wind. As both vessels drew towards the land, the trade-wind evidently got lighter and

more variable : the felucca was able therefore to creep away from the frigate.

For three days and nights the chase continued ; and when the morning of the fourth day came, the low land of the coast to the northward of Cape Blanco was seen. The chase, far away north of her pursuer, had trimmed her sails to the light air from the eastward, and was hugging the coast, intending to creep back to Sallee, or gain perhaps an entrance into the Mediterranean. The Arethusa was becalmed, her head round the compass,—not the slightest air reached her to give her steerage-way. The boats were therefore hoisted out, manned and armed, and, under the orders of the first-lieutenant, pursued the crafty ‘ Devil.’ The broiling sun of this climate soon rose to render the enterprise more desperate : whilst the cool of the morning remained, the men worked with a good will ; but long before eight o’clock, when they had neared the felucca very considerably, and had left the Arethusa almost out of sight, the overpowering heat compelled the men to relax in their labours.

Resolved not to lose the chase, the boats were divided. One division kept languidly dabbling the oars in the water and still gaining on the chase, whilst the others refreshed themselves with some biscuit and grog; thus taking spell and spell about, and gradually drawing within gun-shot of the felucca. The Arethusa was by this time entirely out of sight. Captain Murray had directed his lieutenant, in the event of parting company, to run down under Cape Blanco, where he would find the frigate either in the offing or at anchor; but, at all events, not to give up the chase whilst a hope remained of her capture. The boats had each one week's provision and water, and from the directions given to keep close alongshore, there was no fear of their being driven to sea should a tornado come on. With such orders, it was not very probable that the crews of the boats would return, without a breeze had sprung up and the felucca run them out of sight.

As the men were completely exhausted by the overpowering heat, and the felucca manifested a certain determination of resist-

ance by firing a round-shot over the boats, it was judged advisable to refresh them by a general rest for an hour. So weak indeed had they become from the long and hard pull, that one or two were scarcely able to lay in their oars. It was about two o'clock P.M., the hottest part of the day, when the men, making the boats' sails into awnings, fell asleep, — the officers alone keeping awake. Never was more complete exhaustion manifested, and to run alongside of the felucca whilst the men were in such a condition would have been to ensure certain destruction.

In the mean time, not the slightest air arose to counteract the burning heat: the boats and the chase both lay becalmed; but the latter availed herself of her sweeps, and began soon to creep away again. This rendered it necessary to have recourse to the oars; but to effect this, the language neither of hope nor contempt was of any avail: the men, — and those tried men too, who had faced so many dangers and difficulties — who had been in so many engagements, and who volunteered

for this service,—were completely exhausted ; they called for water, and declared themselves willing to die, but unable to work. One or two, more spirited than the rest, made a great effort to overcome their languor, but it failed ; the heat had done more in eight hours than actual labour would have done in twenty-four.

It was with an aching heart that the gallant officer perceived the vessel slipping gradually from his grasp. The midshipmen in the other boats endeavoured to console him by the assurance, that even the men in the felucca, although under awnings, could not long continue the exertion ; and that when the sun went down, the lost way would soon be made up, and the attack be conducted with more sure success in darkness. But the fear of the land-breeze springing up took away much of the balm such words offered. It was useless, however, to grow either morose or desponding ; for such was the state of the men, that if the pirate had come alongside of them, it was doubtful if they could have made much resistance.

By five o'clock the intense heat had abated : the crews of the different boats, refreshed by their sleep and reinvigorated by some food, took to their oars, and with a cheer of contentment they set to work, declaring they could go on all night without complaint, but that to continue during the heat of the day had been impossible. By seven o'clock, the boats were again within gun-shot ; but the felucca had prepared herself for a vigorous defence. Boarding-nettings were run up ; she had lowered her long unwieldy yards, and had placed them fore and aft, leaving them sufficiently aloft for the crew to pass from side to side : she had substituted for these, square yards, evidently prepared for the purpose, and her bows were the only part not sufficiently protected : these were, however, so sharp and narrow, that there was less need of the netting in that part. On nearing her, the officers in the different boats beheld another mode of defence, which had at first escaped their notice : inside of the netting bristled a row of boarding-pikes from the hull of the felucca, whilst here and there a spar was run

out so as to prevent the boats from coming alongside. She lay like a porcupine with its quills pointed, and offered herself boldly to any one who would have the courage to handle her.

Not a shot had yet been fired; the boats were within two hundred yards of the pirate, when it was judged necessary to alter the mode of attack, and for this reason it was delayed. To board her on the quarter appeared almost impossible; stout spars had been rigged out to boom off any invaders; the broadside looked impregnable: the bows alone appeared assailable, and to this point the lieutenant directed his attack.

“We must board her on both bows,” he exclaimed: “the first on board must make way for his followers. The two barges must take this position; the two cutters will keep one on each quarter, and endeavour to gain a footing on the quarter-deck. But, whatever you do, take care and be cautious: it will not do to rush alongside, and have the boarding-nets over us; and rely upon it, we shall

not find the bows unprotected. Now then, my lads !—three cheers, and a handful of dollars for the first on board.”

The pirate appeared to consider herself perfectly secure against the attack ; only one or two heads had peeped over the taffrail : but now, when the consultation was taking place in the boats, a loud voice was heard hailing the boats in English. It checked the cheer, and was thus followed : “ Boats a-hoy !” The lieutenant, standing up, answered, “ Hulloo !”

“ The captain has desired me to tell you to keep off. He says he does not want your blood, and that you shan’t have his felucca ; and recommends you to follow his good advice, which is to turn tail and go back to your frigate. You will do so much better now, than when half of your men are killed, and the other half wounded ; half your boats sunk, and the other half leaky. That ’s all : do as you like.”

“ What vessel is that ?” said the lieutenant.

“ The Happy-go-lucky, or the Devil’s Playmate,” answered the first man.

“ What is she ?” demanded the lieutenant.

“A felucca,” answered the pirate.

“Where are you from?” still continued the lieutenant, the boats gradually creeping up.

“From where you saw us,” answered the man: “and I advise you to stay where you are, or you will repent it.”

“Three cheers, my lads! and a yard-arm for that vagabond.”

The cheers followed the words, and a peel of musquetry, accompanied by the contents of two swivels placed on the taffrail, came wizzing into the boats. So well was the fire directed, that the attacking force was considerably weakened; one or two oars slipped from the dying hands of those who endeavoured with their last breath to use them, and some confusion was evident from this unexpected and slaughtering salute. “Give way, my lads!” said the lieutenant, “and board her before they load again.”

The advice was good, and was not neglected; but another volley from a party of men on the broadside showed how well the men were trained who thus defended their lives. Undis-

mayed by this second warning, however, the two barges pushed for the bows; whilst the cutter, in order to draw off the attention of the pirate, kept up a quick fire of musquetry from the four marines in each boat, who, with the steadiness that ever distinguishes that noble corps, continued their fire, notwithstanding the shower of bullets to which they were exposed, and which must have been crammed by handfuls into the swivels. As the barges passed ahead of the felucca they faced about, and got stem on to the pirate. This was done to avoid two long stout spars, like sweeps, which rendered it impossible to get under the bows in any other way except by either backing the boat against the stem, or going stem on—the last was preferred. The boat which bore the lieutenant commenced the attack; and just as she was placed under the head in order to be better protected, a huge stone, which had been swung close up under the bowsprit, was cut away: it fell in the centre of the boat, stove and immediately sunk her. In vain did some of the poor fellows endeavour to cling to the

vessel; the bows had been covered with grease, and not a rope hung overboard. As they struggled to escape the death which appeared the nearest, they were savagely struck by boarding-pikes; the pirates shouting in exultation, and daring the other boat, which was endeavouring to rescue some of the swimmers, to continue the attack.

In the mean time, the shout of victory which the pirates gave enticed the men stationed on the quarters to forsake their posts; who, believing from the cautious manner with which both cutters acted, that they would not venture nearer the felucca, gratified their curiosity by going forward to observe the struggling seamen coldly butchered. The other barge, having rescued one or two of the men, now advanced in spite of the warm and steady opposition with which they were met. The cheering of the barge's crew was altogether too exhilarating for the crews in the cutters to remain inactive: they advanced boldly on the quarters, and cautiously avoiding the spars, which would otherwise have stove the boats, they suc-

ceeded; for they were but triflingly opposed in getting athwart the stern.

The few who had stood at their post now rushed forward and apprised the captain of the felucca of this unexpected success on the part of the assailants. With a coolness equal to his courage, he despatched twenty men to murder the boarders; who, in their turn, accustomed to surmount difficulties, and cheered on by those behind them, made good a landing over the taffrail. Not more than six got on board before the pirates rushed aft. The slaughtering struggle which ensued was not of long duration: overpowered by numbers of these desperate men, who knew that their own lives would be sacrificed if they surrendered, the *Arethusa's* men were beaten back—four were killed, and the others were glad enough to leap overboard.

Still they were undaunted: the animating cheers from the barge, as her gallant crew boldly endeavoured to board over the bows, were answered by the cutters' crews, who again and again came to the attack. The numbers

of the assailants, however, gradually grew less at each repulse, the cheer became less and less powerful, whilst the hurrahs of the pirates increased in strength. The last great rush was, like the rest, unavailing: the barge backed clear of the vessel; the cutters extricated themselves from their insecure position, and the three boats, joining company about pistol-shot from the felucca, held a council of war. In the barge only six men remained unhurt; and of those in the cutters, not more than ten could be called actually efficient: and although the crew were still eager to try once more, and the marines most cordially seconded the proposition, yet it was evident that the case was hopeless.

In the mean time, the same voice which had warned them not to attempt the attack, again offered its friendly advice. "Go back to your ship, silly fellows!" was heard. "I warned you not to play with desperate men. Do you think we are going to be towed alongside of the frigate, to be hung at the yard-arm? Go and tell your captain that the Devil's crew disdain to follow up a beaten enemy from

whom no prize-money can be got : and you may thank your poverty, (for your jackets are no use to us,) for your escape. Good night ! Come, lads, give them three cheers !—Away with you !”

The blood of all the crew boiled at this insult—the men almost mutinied against their officers, who, seeing how idle it was to entertain any further hope of success, resolved not to risk a further loss, and with many murmurings, not loud but deep, the gallant fellows turned their boats’ heads towards the appointed rendezvous, and slowly left the felucca to follow her piratical employment. No sooner was this perceived on board the vessel, than the boarding nettings were lowered, the square yards replaced by the long lateen sails, and *Il Diavolo*, catching a light breeze which sprang up from the eastward, stood alongshore to the northward.

The boats’ crews gladly availed themselves of this light flaw of wind ; they stepped their masts, and placing their wounded messmates into the most comfortable situation, the weary

and the wounded lay down to rest, as the boat, under the direction of the officer, slowly and silently slipped through the water, standing to the southward.

The Arethusa, when she parted company with her boats, stood in-shore towards Cape Blanco ; and finding a bay with good anchorage in seven fathoms water, Captain Murray resolved to await the return of his men, and keeping his ship at some distance from the shore, he anchored the same evening. The next day was employed in examining the coast and sounding : the opening before mentioned having been observed, it was resolved on the following morning to send the jolly-boat with the seine in order to catch some fish ; and hence the fortunate meeting with Hammerton already mentioned.

In the mean time, some anxiety was manifested for the fate of the boats ; since it not unfrequently happens along the coast of Africa, that very heavy gales, which perhaps do not reach more than four or five miles in extent, come suddenly upon the traders and blow them

to sea. The gales rarely last more than eight hours; but during that time they might carry the boats far out, and render it very difficult to regain the land. The look-out man at the maintop-gallant mast-head was frequently hailed, and as frequently to the question, "Do you see the boats coming?" answered in the negative.

Captain Murray's attention was now divided between anxiety for his men and curiosity respecting the stranger. The long uncombed beard and grisly mustachios shaded half the face and features of the unfortunate Hammer-ton. He had fallen into an uneasy slumber: his limbs were constantly in motion; and to the inquisitive ear which was placed near his mouth as his lips moved, he was distinctly heard to speak in English: it was a hurried expression of caution to a female. Then would follow words in another language, to which the listener was a stranger; but those in English were well pronounced, so as not to leave a doubt but that the unfortunate man was an

Englishman. Every care and attention which hospitality or professional skill could contribute were lavished upon him ; and the surgeon gave every hope that the poor fellow would recover, and that before another day had elapsed his history would be familiar to the seamen, who vied with each other in endeavouring to contribute to his comfort. Along the beach from which he had been rescued, numbers of Moors were still occasionally seen ; but from their cautious manner in secreting themselves behind some hillocks of sand, it was judged advisable not to venture on any intercourse with them, as the bright end of a long spear not unfrequently dazzled in the sun's rays.

Whilst anxiously watching the Moors, who now and then waved a rag from the end of their spears as if courting an interview, the boats were reported from the mast-head. The glasses were soon in requisition — only three could be discerned, and those came slowly on — the sails flapped in the light air ; and the lan-

guid pull of only two oars from each side, distinctly seen as the boats neared the frigate, caused the most painful emotions in Murray's breast. In a moment the truth flashed across his mind : he was not deceived.

CHAPTER XII.

The Pirate.

THIS was Murray's first reverse, and bitterly he felt it. He had lost one lieutenant, one midshipman, and six seamen killed; the wounded fortunately were not seriously hurt; but the vessel had escaped, and Il Diavolo was still the terror of the trade.

The Arethusa, immediately after the return of her boats, weighed and ran to the southward. To have pursued the felucca to the northward was useless; for Murray well knew that he stood a better chance of finding her anywhere else than in that direction, since no vessels either homeward or outward bound hug the coast between Cape Blanco and Sallee. If

she had gone to the northward of the last-named port, the Arethusa would have been obliged to quit her station.

In order to act up to his orders, Captain Murray steered towards Goree ; and in the mean time Hammerton recovered. Great indeed was the poor fellow's gratitude for his escape. His first exclamation on recovery was, "Where am I?" The answer, "On board the Arethusa," caused a shriek of delight.

"The very ship my sister christened ! Who commands her ?"

"Walter Murray."

"If, sir," continued Hammerton, "your kindness is not exhausted, may I ask you to tell the captain the stranger wishes to see him?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the gunner, as the surgeon walked away to apprise the captain of this request, "but they tell me you speak English, and are a Turk.—I have brought you a volume of the Truth, and a tract of my own. When you have read the one and studied the other, you shall find yourself a happy

man ; and by way of beginning, the ship's barber is come to take off your outlandish beard and mustachios." The gunner continued to pour out a stream of consolation to one whom he regarded as a benighted man, and gave vent to his honest feelings as he endeavoured to reclaim an infidel.

Hammerton's cot had been hung up under the half-deck in a screened berth, and Mr. Pounce's salutary lecture was cut short by the appearance of the captain, who attended this strange summons. Hammerton's eye brightened as he approached ; but when he endeavoured to trace the features of the boy in the stronger outline of the man, he found them so different, that he fell back disappointed upon his pillow, closed his eyes, and said, " Alas ! my fortune never could have been so great : it is not him."

With a kindness habitual to a gentleman, Murray addressed the thoughtful Hammerton. He mentioned his satisfaction at having been useful in saving him from the Moors ; and after promising him every attention and kindness, he inquired his name.

“ A name which in itself is misfortune ! a name which I shall now reclaim, although changed for Abdallah—Frederic Hammerton.”

“ Hammerton !” exclaimed Murray : “ by Heavens ! and so positively it is : I never dreamt that such good fortune awaited me ! Now, indeed, will Amelia’s happiness be complete. — Let this cot,” he continued, “ be removed instantly into my cabin.” Then turning to the surgeon, he said, “ I fear to tell him the truth, for he is yet half wandering in his mind : he is my lost brother-in-law.”

The surgeon began to think his captain himself a little deranged. The sick man was immediately removed ; and the care and quiet of the Arethusa soon restored Hammerton to a convalescent health. His beard was mowed, his upper lip shorn, and when washed and habited like a Christian, the manners of the gentleman, in spite of the rough wear and tear of life, were soon visible :—so true it is, that early habits of propriety always remain deeply impressed ; and that however low may be our associates, yet the character once formed in

youth, is never entirely obliterated. Every moment now grew into an hour: Hammerton could not believe himself safe until he should shake hands with Sir Hector, and once more stand upon English ground.

During their frequent conversations, Walter confessed to Hammerton that he never had forgotten the blow inflicted upon him; he confessed to him that he had abstracted the fifty pounds intended for him; and he finished by thanking Heaven that an opportunity now occurred of proving to his father that the last of his failings, which had clung to him from his earliest infancy, and which had prompted him to the disgraceful act he now endeavoured to atone for, was eradicated. “Your former life, Hammerton—your days of slavery and misfortune, are now passed. Do not despond because you are poor, and have not one cownie in the world with which to buy your bread. I was the cause—the innocent cause—in the first instance, of all your misfortunes. It was to save my then worthless life that you risked your own; every calamity arose out of that: and yet,” said

he, “that very circumstance becomes your greatest good fortune. It places me in a situation which I shall be proud to hold and to acknowledge—that of returning the good by making you independent; and all the hard rubs that you have encountered, and the misery you have escaped, will scarcely be remembered, except to draw comparisons of the past with the affluence and security of the future. My purse, Hammerton, is yours; and time shall show how sincere I am in making the offer. In the mean time, write to your sister, as we may have an opportunity of sending it; but, thank Heaven! our time is short on this coast, and we shall soon carry on for Old England.” Having obeyed the directions in his sailing orders, and having accidentally touched on a rock off the Islands de Loss, the *Arethusa* stretched out to sea, in order to return to Portsmouth.

Not many days had elapsed before the same felucca was again discovered, and under circumstances not quite so favourable as before: she was dead to leeward of the frigate, and was

discovered during a hard gale of wind. The frigate, however, instantly bore up, shook out a couple of reefs, and stood away in chase under all the sail she could carry. The pirate was not slow to follow the example; but the sea was high, and the unwieldy yards of that rig intended only for smooth seas and fine weather was much against an escape. She was obliged to keep the wind on the quarter; for had she kept right before it, the danger of jibbing the sails was evident. The little vessel seemed to fly before the breeze; whilst the *Arethusa* surged along steadier and quicker than the chase. The felucca was nearly buried by the press of canvass she carried; whilst the frigate, avoiding that error of carrying too much sail, rattled merrily along at the rate of twelve knots an hour.

The capture was now a certainty. Murray's anxiety increased as he neared the chase: his object was to take her without a chance-shot killing one of her men. It was the wish nearest his heart to make those villains pay the forfeit of their crimes,—to see them dangling to gib-

bets, a terror to all such marauders, and a just retribution for their past conduct. "I have you now, my little Devil!" he said, as the frigate surged along between the seas; and as the coming wave lifted her up on its breaking head, it seemed to dash her headlong into the valley beneath.

The gale increased. Still the felucca stood on, until a shot from the frigate went far beyond her: then, indeed, escape appeared desperate. The long yards were lowered; Spanish colours shown; the felucca, watching her opportunity, rounded to, and appeared resigned to her fate.

With the eagerness to grasp his prey which ever distinguished Murray, and in spite of the more prudent counsel of the wary old master, the *Arethusa* continued to run under the same sail she then carried, until, close alongside to windward of the felucca, she rounded to. There were volunteers in plenty (some who had already been on board of her) to man the boat; but great caution was requisite, for the sea ran high.

Every sail now instantly was taken off the frigate, the men were sent aloft to reef topsails,

as the boat, lowered with the crew and officer in her, were safely launched and cleared the frigate's counter. The distance between the two vessels could not have been two hundred yards: she lay right on the broadside of the frigate, which, however, in rounding to, forged ahead, and brought her on the larboard quarter.

No sooner had the boat cleared the frigate, than a man appeared on board the felucca with a rope's end ready to assist the boat in coming alongside. As she passed under the stern, this was hove into the boat, instantly a small jib was set, the vessel paid off and gathered way.

Imagining something was about to be done which would render the boarding more difficult, every exertion was used to get the boat alongside by the crew in her. Some were obliged to keep ready with the stretchers, in order to keep her off from the vessel as she rolled over to leeward; but every time the boat got up on the quarter near enough to attempt boarding, the rope was veered away. The felucca was now before the wind, and coming to the wind on the larboard tack; her close-reefed sails from the storm-yards were now hoisted, the boat was

cut adrift, and the pirate, whose situation before had been desperate, resolved to make another attempt to escape from the frigate.

The marines of the *Arethusa* opened a fire of small arms on the vessel ; but she was soon out of reach of shot. The men being on the yards reefing, it was dangerous to wear ; and the boat being to leeward, and having to pull against a heavy sea, made but little progress. In the mean time, the *Diavolo* kept a point or two away in order to increase her distance ; and before the *Arethusa's* topsails were close-reefed, the boat hoisted up, and the frigate on the larboard tack, the little vessel which had attempted and succeeded in this desperate manœuvre was out of gun-shot, and carrying sail in a manner to convince every seaman how well she was calculated for the service on which she was employed.

Captain Murray could not but admire the seamanlike manner in which he had been deceived : it was now evident that when the felucca saw she had no chance of escape before the wind, she lowered her yards, lashed them

fore and aft the deck, bent her storm-sails to smaller yards, and was preparing for the manœuvre she so ably managed.

It now became a chase on a wind ; and here again the frigate's superiority was soon evident. The felucca appeared almost swamped from the water she shipped ; whilst the frigate, although she bore her canvass well, served out an allowance of salt water to all on deck. Under her reefed courses and close-reefed topsails she gained upon the chase ; every yard was well secured ; and Murray, annoyed beyond measure at finding that night would come on before he could be alongside of the chase, was resolved to carry on in spite of squalls however violent.

Before sunset the frigate was near enough to see into the felucca as she rose to the sea : there were only three men on deck,—two steering, and the other lying down. From the quantity of water she shipped, it appeared a choice of evils, either to be swamped or to be hanged : the pirates evidently preferred the former, and, in spite of a warning from the Arethusa in the shape of an iron messenger, she still carried on.

“A chance-shot,” said Hammerton, who was as much excited as any man on board, “may kill the Devil. Let me fire the next gun.” As it was evident that all shots with a ship pitching bows under must be chance-shots, Hammerton’s whim was gratified. The pirate did not heed his warning any more than the rest; and when darkness came on, the *Diavolo* was about a mile ahead of the frigate, holding on most desperately, her lee-gunwale under water, with every sea breaking over her.

It now became rather a difficult task to keep sight of her: she was so low, that she disappeared every minute between the seas. The night-glass was of no use; and a looking-glass—one of the best modes of keeping sight of a vessel in the night-time—was soon so covered with the spray, that it was rendered unserviceable. Many eyes were still fixed in the direction of the chase: “There she is!—there she is again!” was heard every time she became visible, until at last those cheering words were no longer heard,—not a soul could see her. “She must have capsized, sir,” said one;—“She is

gone to her namesake," said another ;—"The Lord have mercy upon them all !" said the gunner.

"We had better shorten sail, sir," said the master ; "the slower we go now the better. That vessel is not capsized ; she is much too good a sea-boat for that : she is up to some other trick."

The courses were hauled up, and the Arethusa, released from her press of canvass, rolled easily over the sea. Men were placed to look out in every direction : a quarter of an hour elapsed, and still the felucca was undiscovered. At last a mizen-top man placed on the lee-quarter called out that he thought he saw something black on the water ; and the sharp eye of an eager midshipman instantly discovered the felucca, the captain of which vessel had tried another scheme to escape. He had lowered his sails, and trusted to his good fortune, which until now had never deserted him. The frigate had passed her without being aware of it, and every moment was contributing to his further security, when a towering sea lifted

the little Devil on its head, which enabled the mizen-top man to discover her.

Directly the Arethusa began to wear, the felucca ran up some square sails, and once more tried to escape before the wind : she was now plainly visible almost under the bows. The frigate was surging over the seas right in the wake of the chase ; the marines were on the forecastle, and kept up a continued fire—successfully or not, was doubtful. Occasionally the bow-gun was fired, charged with grape and canister ; but still the little vessel continued her course. The fate of the chase was now reduced to a certainty ; her good fortune was evidently on the wane ; the frigate neared her—too fatally neared her. Another attempt was still made,—to round suddenly to—again to try her speed on a wind. The frigate was so close, however, that before she could come to the wind she must shoot by her : the helm of the Diavolo immediately was put gently a-starboard ; and the little vessel flew round as her sails were lowered. The master, who was forward, saw the attempt, called out “ Starboard a little,” and that little was

fatal :—the Arethusa's deviation from her former course was just sufficient to meet the felucca ; a shock was felt on board the frigate, as if she touched the ground—the Diavolo was cut in half ! and not one soul remained alive of that daring crew ! The angry seas rolled over them : and in the loud moaning of the wind, as it blew through the rigging, something resembling a shriek was heard. Whether it was a shriek, the last effort of despair, which was uttered, is uncertain ; for there was an awful feeling throughout the crew of the Arethusa, akin to fear, at the moment the shock was felt, which would have rendered every ear deaf to the call of pity from the pirate.

In vain was every eye directed now around ; there was not a vestige of the pirate left. The struggling crew were no doubt soon swallowed up in the rolling sea ; nor could the last cry of despair be heard, for the wind blew loudly and heavily, and the water, as the frigate surged through it at the rate of thirteen knots, hissed and foamed, so as almost to drown every other sound as it was dashed from her bows.

So perished the crew of that noted vessel. That the atrocities committed by her commander and crew were exaggerated, there can be no doubt ; but that the blood of many called loudly against them was true ; and although, had she been captured, the crew would have met a more ignominious death, yet there was not a man on board of the *Arethusa* who did not shudder at the catastrophe they had witnessed. Had it been daylight, there was not one of the brave men of that frigate who would not have risked his own life to save those who had so gallantly defended their vessel from the boat-attack, and who had shown in this last affair that courage, which might have sprung, it is true, from despair, but which was manifested in the coolness and steadiness of the manœuvres.

The *Arethusa* now hove-to until the gale should subside ; she then stretched over to the north-west until out of the influence of the trade-wind. Two months from that date she made the light-house of Scilly, and entered the Channel with the intention of steering to Portsmouth, having never seen a stranger from the time of the destruction of the *Diavolo*.

CHAPTER XIII.

Conclusion.

THE arrival of the Arethusa off the coast of England was not destined to realise the anticipations of a happy meeting, indulged in both by Sir Hector and his son ; for, alas ! the health of the former was fast declining.

The break-up of old age is rapid,—the additional furrows of time seem daily to become deeper. The visible alteration for the worse in Sir Hector's appearance produced much painful anxiety on the mind of Amelia: she feared that he might not survive until Walter could reach at his paternal home. The medical attendant, an old and tried friend, recommended that Sir Hector should be removed to some place which might offer some more excitement than the dull retreat where he had so long linger-

ed. After various suggestions and long consultations, it was decided that the old baronet should be removed to Tor Bay, there to remain two months; at the end of which time, if he held on his lingering existence, he was to return.

This was opposed with more spirit by Sir Hector than the medical man believed to exist in him. “He had,” he said, “built his vault, and could look at it undismayed.” As Nelson had his coffin made from the mainmast of one of his captures, and as he, before he left England to take command of the fleet so soon to be engaged at Trafalgar, called upon the undertaker and told him to keep the last tenement ready, for that he should soon want it; so, Sir Hector, having spent a youth of labour and an age of ease—having passed his life in doing good to those around him, calmly resigned himself to the will of Providence.

“Would that all had your feelings!” replied Amelia; “but in this world we must obey the doctor. To-morrow we go to Torbay: I shall write letters to Portsmouth and Plymouth, to be delivered on the arrival of the *Arethusa*;

and Walter will thus learn, the minute he arrives, of our retreat."

"Mind, my girl," said the worthy old baronet, "that the poor are paid during our absence. There are some as old as myself who cannot walk to my door. I leave them pensioners upon your bounty."

Shortly after this the *Arethusa* entered the Channel. The report of land was re-echoed along the decks, and the very light air which scarcely set the royals asleep was coaxed to freshen by every man fore and aft as he came on deck whistling to windward; — a sailor's mode of soliciting the clerk of the weather to be more generous of the breeze; but the light air grew less and less, until

"The idle sail hung useless from the yard."

As the sun went down and night advanced, the lights on the Lizard Point were seen; and when the watch had been called and mustered, there seemed an unusual silence on board the frigate. Hammerton had evinced much restless inquietude during the day, and now was leaning over the taffrail watching the lights, his thoughts

fixed on all the happiness yet in store for him. Before him was his native land,—there the place from which he had so long been exiled,—there his sister, the only surviving member of his family ; all were gone but her. His many days of misfortune seemed to have entailed upon him a certain continuation of ill luck. From the day that he had placed his foot on board the frigate, the fortunes of Walter seemed to have changed : the ship had struck on a rock ; the *Diavolo*, although destroyed, was not captured ; not a vessel had been seen although thousands of miles had been traversed ; and even now, as he saw the Lizard lights, he could not persuade himself but that some unlucky catastrophe still awaited him. He looked over the taffrail and gazed upon the stars reflected in the large mirror beneath : although not destitute of hope, yet a fear—a melancholy fear hung over him.

He was aroused from this reverie by the look-out on the starboard quarter, as the bell struck two, giving a warning to the man on the starboard gangway to keep a good look-out. These

words were passed round to each man on the different stations, and were wound up by "Ay, ay," from the man on the larboard quarter. A shout of laughter was then heard forward; and Hammerton, no longer inclined to fancy himself the boding raven, went on the fore-castle and listened to the yarns of the seamen as they sat between the guns, all lively and happy at their return from the coast of Africa uninjured by that unhealthy climate. "They are not heaving round the capstan now at Portsmouth Point, at any rate," said one. "I suppose all the girls are gone to supper; but to-morrow, when the breeze comes, they'll tow us along merrily." "Give us a song, Tom: what ship from a foreign station ever made the land without the lads of the first watch having a glass of grog and chaunting a stave?"

Murray was on deck and heard the remark. Hammerton walked aft, and begged he might be allowed to give the jolly fellows a glass to drink his return, and to coax them to sing a song or two, the last he might ever hear from the lips of a sailor on his own element. The request was

immediately granted, accompanied by a warning in regard to prudence. Hammerton, with a bottle of rum in one hand and a jug of water in the other, was soon on the forecastle.

“Now, my lads,” said he, “here is the liquor of life: get a pannikin, and I ’ll bale it out to you. If it had not been for you, I should now have been a slave condemned to lasting captivity; so here ’s a drop to drink my safe landing, to wash the cobwebs out of your throats, and to clear your voices for a song.”

“Now, then, Tom, if you have not swallowed a topchain, tune up! That rum ’s good; but it ’s rather spoilt by the water. Begs your pardon, Mr. Hammerton, but I should be mighty obliged if you could give us a nip without the pump.”

“No, no, my lads!” replied Hammerton; “half-and-half is strong enough to begin with. Let ’s have the song first, and we ’ll talk of the raw nip afterwards.”

“Here goes!” said old Tom. “But my throat ’s precious dusty! I ’m blessed if I don’t think I ’ve got some of the sand of Cape Blanco sticking there yet, and I feel as if that

black Moor on his long-legged, humped-back horse was shoving it down my throat with the butt-end of his spear. It was touch-and-go there, Mr. Hammerton. Do just try another touch-and-go, to wash the sand down."

"There," said Hammerton as he took the hint: "as you are to sing, you must have an extra allowance."

"Then you'll have plenty of songs at that rate," said another. "But fire away, Tom!"

THE ARETHUSA.

"A sail in sight to leeward, boys, we saw at break of day;
We crowded all our canvass on, at once we bore away.
The stranger hove-to gallantly, which gave us great delight,
For she seem'd to scorn to run away, and boldly stay'd to fight.

To quarters, boys—to quarters,
The Frenchman thinks he's caught us;
But we'll show them what we'll do,
With the brave and gallant crew,
On board of the Arethusa.

Be steady now, my noble lads, don't throw away your fire,
But give three hearty British cheers, our courage to inspire.
And they shall hear the hearty cheers, for we'll be close enough,
And make the Frenchman know my crew are made of proper stuff.

Now steady, boys, be steady;
Now ready, lads, be ready;
Now pour your broadside in,
And thus the fight begin,
On board of the Arethusa.

We sarved them out in proper style—the grape-shot flew
like hail;
When British hearts are firm and good, we know they
never fail.
The colours soon came tumbling down, the frigate was our
prize,—
An equal match in length and breadth, in crew, in guns,
in size.

Now chorus, lads, the chorus;
How the women will adore us!
When they raise the welcome din,
As we tow the Didon in,
Astern of the Arethusa!"

"Chorus again!" said Hammerton as he rubbed his hands with delight; "and Hurrah! for the hope that we may yet get a brush at a frigate and tow in another prize to the anchorage at Spithead."

All hands joined in the coal-box, as the seamen invariably call the chorus; and the author of the song, who was the singer, had another glass of grog for his chaunt, and was perhaps better rewarded by Murray, who called out,

“ Well done—well done !” and as he came forward, he said, “ I ’m afraid latterly we have not given you much chance of another song ; but before the war is over, we may yet have another brush, and give another subject to make verses upon.”

“ To-morrow,” said Murray as he walked aft with Hammerton, — “ to-morrow may place you on English ground again : a calm is always half a fair wind, and I shall hug the shore and pop you into any fishing-boat which we may meet. However, to-night, if we get a breeze, we will stand over on the French coast : your ill luck has not yet, I hope, overbalanced my good fortune.”

“ I am a regular Jonas, Murray ; and I think, if you were to throw me overboard with a black cat in my pocket, I should whirl about like Macbeth’s witches in the sieve, and be always in fear of drowning without the luck of being so. But good night, and good luck attend you !”

About eleven o’clock a moderate breeze sprung up from the N.W. ; and Murray, according to his resolution, made a start over

towards the enemy's coast. The night was fine and clear, and a very good look-out was kept. Daylight, however, came ; and although a most anxious search was made by the midshipman of the watch, who from the fore-top-sail yard swept the horizon with a glass, yet not a sail could be discerned. Hammerton was on deck early, and heard the report from the mast-head with a heavy heart.

“ I am,” said he, “ the most unlucky fellow that ever stepped. I would have given any sum I could have commanded to have apprised my sister of my restoration, in order better to prepare her for the meeting ; but I shall herald myself as I did to my poor father, and, I suppose, frighten her to death. But it is my destiny ; and I still retain some part of the Turkish creed, which coincides so exactly with that of my poor father.”

“ I beg your pardon, sir,” said Pounce as he passed Hammerton ; “ but I should like to know if you have been converted, because I have some tracts very much at your service.”

“ Thank you,” said Hammerton. “ God

knows, I would willingly thank the man who would convert me into a lucky fellow."

Noon came,—the dinner was piped, grog served, mast-head-men relieved,—nothing in sight. "Now," said Hammerton, "I'll go to the mast-head, and there I'll stick until sunset on the look-out for either land or a sail." The wind had been variable, but had now settled at S.W. by S. with every appearance of that comfortable mist which generally is the forerunner of a S.W. gale of wind in the English Channel in the month of February.

Hammerton went aloft, and sitting on the fore-topsail yard, the *Arethusa* being on the larboard tack, he began to run over his past life, and think of his chance for the future. He still liked the sea; but he was too old to re-enter it as a midshipman, and he was much too proud to be a pensioner upon Murray. They were, it is true, brothers-in-law; but brothers not unfrequently quarrel, and the word pauper is sometimes not inaudibly muttered.

Whilst thus carelessly musing over past scenes of his life, and humming the chorus of

old Tom's song, which somehow came oddly enough upon his memory, he looked cautiously round, and was the first to descry a strange sail to leeward. He had taken a glass aloft with him, and steadying himself by a firm hold of the topsail tie, he made her out to be a large ship close-hauled on the starboard tack: Murray, who was an active man and a keen cruiser, at once decided upon overhauling her, and desiring the officer of the watch to turn the hands up, make sail, indeed to set all the sail the frigate would carry, himself seudded aloft, and taking the glass from Hammerton, he remained steadily observing the stranger. At length he called out, "If that is not a French frigate, there are no snakes in Virginia, as you say, Hammerton." Again he looked, was perfectly satisfied in his own mind, and giving Hammerton the glass, he added, "Luck's turned: you saw her first, and you shall have an opportunity of lending a hand at her capture."

Fore and aft the *Arethusa*, the word flew like wild fire—"The captain says she is a French frigate. Hurrah! one and all, and

let's work like Russians !” The noble frigate was now under all canvass ; her well-disciplined crew obeyed the sound of the drum as it beat to the well-known air which, in most ships in the British Navy, is played to summon all hands to quarters, of

“ Come cheer up, my lads, 'tis to glory we steer,
To add something new to this wonderful year :
'Tis to honour we call you, nor press you like slaves,
For who are so free as we sons of the waves ?”

Then came a little noise in the handing of shot, the placing of sponges and rammers, and in the preparation of all those articles used in naval combats.

It was two P.M. when the Arethusa first saw the chase and bore up. By half-past two there remained no doubt in the minds of any but that she was an enemy ; for at this time the stranger, as if satisfied of the force and intention of her pursuer, bore up also, and made a great effort by the crowd of sail she set to effect an escape. This was decisive : any of his Britannic Majesty's ships would have been as eager to close the Arethusa and satisfy them-

selves of her nation, as Murray was now anxious to ascertain more closely the force of his flying enemy. The excitement was intense : the seamen rubbed their hands as they caught a glimpse of the chase ; and as they passed old Tom, they would give him a seaman's tap on the shoulder,—a blow generally strong enough to fell an ox, and sing,

“—Now Chorus, lads,—chorus ;
How the women will adore us,
When they raise the welcome din,
As we tow the Frenchman in,
Astern of the Arethusa !”

At four o'clock the wind veered to the N.W. and fell considerably : the ship to the eager minds of the seamen scarcely moved ; but yet it was evident to those who watched with coolness that the Arethusa gained upon the chase, and that at this hour she was not more than four miles distant. But four miles at four o'clock in February in the Channel is as bad as ten miles in August. The general fogs which pervade our unhappy climate are kinds of cloaks to conceal the fugitive, and many doubts began to be afloat as to the ultimate success of

the chase. Indeed, there was a certainty that the action might be delayed until dark ; when, to the gratification and surprise of all, the French frigate, then bearing E.N.E. suddenly shortened sail and endeavoured to cross the hawse of the *Arethusa*.

The action was now certain : the manœuvre was welcomed by the crew of the English frigate by a loud shout of joy ; that shout was given with louder tongue, when, at a quarter to five, the *Arethusa* fired a gun and hoisted her colours, and the stranger, as if far from wishing to conceal her nation, hoisted the large tricoloured flag of France, and seemed not at all disposed to evade her antagonist.

There was a confidence in Murray's manner which was conspicuous to all : he spoke to his men, not under the slightest impression that he could be beaten ; he called it a little amusement for his men before they went on shore at Portsmouth ; he treated his adversary as already beaten ; but he was much too wise in reality to despise his foe. His men caught his words with avidity ; they gave those cheers

which English seamen always give before an action ; and having the greatest confidence in their commander, they saw but a glorious issue to the approaching struggle, and stood at their quarters silently awaiting the order to fire. He wound up his speech in these few words :—
“ My lads, although we are as certain of that frigate as we are of going into Portsmouth, yet we must not let our confidence lead us to treat her with disrespect ; we will hug her closely, and you will best show your coolness by the steady aim which you will take, and your caution not foolishly to waste powder and shot. Stand to your guns !”

At five o'clock, the *Arethusa*, having previously bore up, passed close under the stern of the French frigate, and having given her a cheer, poured in her starboard broadside, raking her fore and aft. She then luffed up close upon the quarter, and was welcomed by a very heavy, well-directed, destructive fire ; and before she could reach the bow of the enemy, the *Arethusa* had lost her mizen-mast, which fell over the starboard quarter.

During the twenty minutes which elapsed from the first raking fire of the *Arethusa* to the moment her mizen-mast was shot away, the French frigate had been severely handled also. Her foretop-mast fell over the side, and she shot ahead, not at all dismayed from the fire of her adversary, but rather rejoicing that as yet she had not suffered so much as her opponent.

Frenchmen flushed with success are dangerous enemies: the national spirit rises with the apparent facility of conquest. Hence the rapid victories under Napoleon: they believed themselves invincible—and went into battle resolved upon conquest. The British Navy had the same feeling: they had scarcely ever met a reverse upon the open seas; one frigate opposed to another was considered a certain capture—the English went into action with a confidence amounting to temerity. The French met their enemies with a feeling of certain misfortune: throughout the whole war we have not one instance of a French frigate chasing an English frigate when the force was ascertained. The very circumstance of being

chased, and of endeavouring to avoid an action, was not likely to instil more courage into the flying ship's company, and they felt themselves obliged to fight when the superior sailing of the chasing ship had brought her nearly alongside ; as a stag pursued, when fight is useless, turns and stands at bay, beaten before it is attacked.

The French frigate, finding herself in an advantageous position, and flushed with her first success in having shot away the mizen-mast of the *Arethusa*, endeavoured to recommence the action by crossing the bows of her adversary, and of returning the compliment of the raking broadside with which she herself had been saluted. To obviate this, which Murray instantly saw, the helm of the *Arethusa* was put hard a-port, and the ship luffed up, in order to run the French frigate on board, and at once to settle the conflict. In this, however, she did not succeed : the wreck of the mizen-mast prevented the ship from answering her helm sufficiently, and the *Arethusa*, as she passed close under the stern of her

opponent, discharged her larboard broadside with good effect.

The two ships now fell broadside to broadside, and the action continued with increased fury. On board the French frigate all was animation—they stood to their guns manfully; whilst on board the *Arethusa* the seamen gave occasional cheers, and never doubted for a moment but that each gun would bring down the large tri-coloured flag which blew out from the French frigate's peak, and finish the action. The *Arethusa* lay close on the starboard beam of her opponent: bravely indeed on both sides was the battle maintained, which at twenty minutes past six gave the French a hope of conquest, when they saw the mainmast of the *Arethusa* fall, which, fortunately for Murray and his brave crew, fell over the unengaged side.

The shout of the French crew was short, for their own mizen-mast soon fell; and this was welcomed by a deafening cheer from the English.

“Arrah!” said an Irish seaman, bellowing through one of the ports, “don’t make game of the stupid! you may be sthruck comical

yourself. Blaze away, boys! what's the use of a mainmast when we don't want to move our position?"

Both ship's companies, if possible, increased their endeavours. The *Arethusa* had only her foremast standing, and there could be no doubt but that she was in one respect at the mercy of her adversary, for she had it in her power to shoot ahead and discontinue the action; but this the French captain felt no inclination to do. He saw before him great rewards from his liberal master, could he but tow the *Arethusa* into a French harbour. Napoleon would have advanced him to any honour; and had he at that moment used the caution of a good seaman, he would have shot ahead and compelled the *Arethusa* to put before the wind.

For ten minutes longer each ship remained in the same position, broadside to broadside; at the expiration of which time the foremast of the *Arethusa* fell, and the mainmast of her adversary went over the side. Now, had Captain Denis Lagarde, who commanded the *Clorinde*, for that was the frigate's name, been but com-

monly prudent, there could be no doubt how the action would have terminated. A dismasted ship is, of course, unmanageable : the Arethusa must have remained rolling in the sea unable to alter her position. The foremast of the *Clorinde* was still standing : under the foresail and fore-staysail the ship would be manageable to a certain extent. He might have placed himself in an advantageous position, and might have nearly insured his adversary's capture ; but escape seemed more desirable than the chance of conquest. Bravely had he fought, gallantly had he maintained his advantage ; and now, when the wings of the bird were broken, he was afraid to stop and pick it up. At ten minutes after seven the *Clorinde* set her foresail and fore-staysail, and standing to the S. E. was soon out of gun-shot.

There are some men to whom Fortune offers her gifts, and who are afraid to receive them : there are others who refuse to float down the flood-tide of success, but run upon the banks and are wrecked. Change the position of those ships : would the Arethusa have availed herself of her standing foremast to have es-

caped? Never: she would have made so certain of the conquest, that she would have hailed the *Clorinde* to strike, and avoid a useless effusion of blood.

With a heavy heart Murray looked at his dismayed ship, his confused decks, his wounded shipmates; but his courage never sank. With a readiness to meet any difficulty, he addressed his men: he urged them to clear the wreck, and put the ship in that position which would enable him to pursue his enemy. The first lieutenant, an active enterprising officer, repeated the orders: the boats' masts were stepped and the sails set. The heavy rolling of the ship, however, was a great impediment to their exertions; but the men placed at the different stations worked with willingness, and the wreck of the lower masts was cleared. There was no wish expressed by that gallant crew to sleep: they felt that accident alone had placed them in the untoward position they were then in; they knew it arose from no want of courage nor seamanship in their gallant captain; and with true English pluck they set about their work with all

willingness, and by five o'clock in the following morning a spare maintop-mast had been rigged as a jury-mainmast. By a quarter after six a jury-foremast was standing, and a mizen-mast also.

Daylight dawned,—and anxiously indeed was dawn welcomed. The *Clorinde* was seen about six miles distant, bearing S. E. She had evidently not profited by the advantage she had gained: the wreck of her main and mizen-mast were not quite cleared, and every moment gave the *Arethusa* a chance of resuming the action. By noon this gallant frigate was under jury-courses, and topsails, staysails, and spanker, going with a northerly wind six knots and a half; whilst her adversary, who had increased her distance to eight miles, had not up to this time cleared away entirely the wreck.

Captain Murray was not a man to forego any advantage: he had been wounded during the action, but his spirit was unconquerable. With every hope before him he received the cheers of his crew as he promised them shortly a renewal of the action: he was overhauling the *Clorinde* fast—his decks were as clear

as the day previous to the action, and no words are sufficient praise for the unremitted exertions of his crew—the activity and seaman-like conduct of that ship's company.*

That Jonas Hammerton was on board!—the seamen, who have a superstitious horror of a parson, a black cat, or a regular Jonas, could hardly bear the sight of him. Every misfortune was attributed to him, whose ill-luck, they said, would founder a frigate. It was yet to be more strikingly evident. The *Arethusa*, under her jury-sails, was fast advancing to renew the action. The *Clorinde* lay almost a complete wreck—her chance was gone, and the only prayer on board the *Arethusa* was for a better breeze and no intruders. The first was heard, but the second was disregarded; for as the frigate increased her way through the water, with her men refreshed and eager for the contest, two English frigates were seen

* The annals of the British Navy cannot show more zeal, or greater promptitude, than was exhibited by Sir John Phillimore and the crew of the *Eurotas*, in the action with the *Clorinde* which is here recorded under the name of Murray and the *Arethusa*.

on the lee-bow. They arrived up with the *Clorinde* before the *Arethusa*, and the French frigate surrendered without further resistance. That she must have fallen a prize to the *Arethusa*, no one can doubt—her flight was sufficient proof of her being conquered ; but the disgrace of the capture was saved by the unfortunate arrival of the two strange frigates.

The *Arethusa* now took the French frigate in tow, and stood towards the English coast with the intention of proceeding towards Portsmouth. Having parted company with the two intruders, who had received some of the French prisoners in their ships.

In the evening the breeze freshened to a gale, and it was judged advisable, on account of the damage both ships had sustained, to run into Torbay and anchor, until more moderate weather should allow them to continue their course. It was midnight when they rounded the point and anchored in security ; but before morning the wind had chopped round, and blew directly into the bay. Both anchors were let go ; and as it was impossible to get to

sea, every precaution was taken to make the frigates ride out the gale.

Some fishing-boats belonging to the place, which were at sea the day before, came running in for safety; and Murray, most anxious to procure something fresh for the wounded, got a boat on board of one to purchase fish. When she returned, the midshipman who had been sent approached his captain and said, "The master of the boat, sir, says Sir Hector Murray and Mrs. Murray are living in that house;" pointing at the same time to a large mansion over Fryingpan-row.

Hammerton heard it, and was almost frantic. He implored Murray to land; and the latter, believing that the gale would soon be over, and that from the variable manner the wind had veered, its strength was at its summit, ordered the gig to be lowered and manned,—and this was the only boat seaworthy.

In the mean time, the fishermen had landed. The cry of "The Arethusa!—The Arethusa!" soon reached the house; and a handkerchief was seen waving from the window, at which stood an old man and a young woman.

Murray's willingness to gratify Hammerton's impatience made him forget his usual prudence: he stepped the mast, and carried the whole sail. The sea was at this time running high, and the boat, as she flew towards the shore, rolled heavily. Hammerton steered with a yoke; and Murray, who kept looking anxiously towards the shore, occasionally gave the man who held the sheet in his hand a glance, as much as to say, "Hold on." The sea rolled in heavily, and it required some—indeed the greatest caution, to prevent the boat from being taken on the quarter and broached to. To obviate this, some strength was requisite with the yoke-lines; and it was whilst approaching rapidly the landing-place, and as the sea lifted the boat, that as Hammerton endeavoured to counteract the effect of the wave, the yoke-line snapped, the boat broached-to, and was capsized.

The accident was seen from the shore. Amelia ran down to the beach half frantic, whilst Sir Hector used his utmost speed to overtake her. The boats from the landing-place were launched; hundreds who were making their remarks on the Arethusa and her prize rushed

forwards to assist, and all used their best exertions to rescue the seamen from the peril which surrounded them.

Murray and his crew now struck out for their lives. Some of them clung to the wreck of the boat, which floated bottom upwards: but Hammerton, who swam well, kept close to Murray, who from his wound was much weakened, and seemed fast giving up his first exertions. "I'll stay by you, Murray," he said: "fear nothing. Don't touch me; but let me get hold of that black ribbon round your neck. Strike out."

Murray gradually became more and more feeble; each sea washed over him; his struggles were nearly over, and yet he did his utmost. He could almost see his wife supported by others, his father tottering from fear; and as the last sea threw him on the beach, the ribbon snapped, and his mother's locket remained in Hammerton's hand. Hammerton instantly seized him by the collar, held him fast as the wave receded and nearly sucked him back into the greedy deep, and before the

following sea could secure him, he was safe on shore.

Amelia was the first to clasp him in her arms, nor scarcely heeded the dark stranger who had rescued him. Murray was unable to speak ; and as his wife thanked Hammerton for his kind assistance in carrying him to the house, Hammerton said, “ I restore you a husband,—he restores you a brother !” The very word riveted her attention : she saw immediately through the darkness of his complexion the features of her long-lost brother Frederick ! Seizing him by the hand, she fainted in his arms.

The recovery of Murray was followed by a restitution of the locket. Sir Hector, who was seated in an arm-chair almost fatally overcome by the agitation, was gratified by the first words of his son. “ Amelia, your brother has saved my life!—Sir,” he continued, as he looked at his father, “ this locket has saved your son. Let me intreat you, whilst you have still life and strength, to secure an independence, out of the property destined for me, upon Frederick Hammerton.”

“God bless you, boy !” said the old man :
“ that last request has cleared away for ever
the only remaining blot on my son’s character,
and you have made me the happiest of fathers.
You went from me a wayward child—you re-
turn to me an honourable and distinguished
man : you were penurious—you are now liberal.
You have caught the honourable feelings of all
officers of the navy ; and I may justly be proud
of that shout which now welcomes you to me,
and join in the cheer for “ The Arethusa !
The Arethusa ! ”

THE END.

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